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SOCIAL SCIENCE AND THE POLITICAL TREND

FRANK H. KNIGHT

THIS is not a "political" discussion. Our concern is solely with the study of political phenomena, the possibility of knowledge and understanding, and incidentally, the prospect that knowledge may result in changing and improving the phenomena themselves. No criticism, or even *critique*, of any political personage or method or act is to be read into the argument. To say this emphatically at the outset is in order because to talk about political phenomena at all, even with a purely descriptive intent, one has to use terms which have what the late Professor Veblen called "honorific" implications (and this includes the "dishonorific"). But the question whether men as scientists can understand the behaviour of men as statesmen and citizens is closely connected with the question how far the latter's behaviour is itself of an intelligent or understanding sort; and such issues are hard to discuss in purely descriptive terms.

Even before the current political trends, which have become increasingly noticeable since the Great War, a number of writers had been questioning how far political activity could be described as consciously intelligent behaviour. The mention of such names as Sorel and Pareto, Cooley, Wallas, and Lévy-Bruhl, is sufficient to emphasize the point, to say nothing of the interpretations of human nature derived from psychopathology. The methodological controversy in economics of the past quarter-century or so looks in the same direction. The rationalistic assumptions of the older classical economics have been under fire, and the type of analysis based

upon them has been yielding ground to other "approaches."

II

On the nature of the current political trend, most of what can be said with confidence is negative. It is something different, change, revolution, a break-down of the old system and of the theory and ideology on which it rested. In particular, it is irrationalistic, romantic, away from thinking, toward action. Well before the War, this tendency was manifest in the declining faith in parliamentarism. Then came the War, with its inevitable regimentation of economic and social life, followed by a brief liberal reaction, and then by the depression, which more and more has come to be seen as a break-down of the old order on its economic side. *Either* economic science failed to find the cause and prescribe a cure *or* political leadership failed to discern in the babel of claims the true economic science, and to follow its behests. In any case, we have seen a discrediting and discarding of old economic and political points of view and axioms, and the rise of a new type of leadership which contrasts strangely with old norms. It does not claim to know, or make its appeal on grounds of knowledge or reason, but rather advocates action as such, the following of an emotional direction or frank experimentation.

The latest main episodes in a change going on all over the world of European liberal civilization are the "New Deals" in Germany and the United States. They use different catchwords, but are variants of the same theme. The German "Leader" is perhaps more frank in his call to his people to "think with their blood;" but the American pose of experimentalism is at bottom the same

thing, the appeal to follow leadership—of the appealer; the cry is "All pull together," meaning "Follow me" (and don't ask critical questions). And the public likes it. The whole West-European social mind is tired of thinking and of argument which seems to lead nowhere, and responds with enthusiasm to the confident proposal to do something about it. The meaning of action, again, is familiar enough; the keynote is to "crack down" on somebody, to make the protestant and non-conformer "feel the full weight of public disapproval." The social science on which the present adult generation was brought up much exaggerated, it would seem, the distance western society had travelled from "primitive" African political ideas with the witch-hunt as the correct procedure for dealing with any public crisis. As to experimenting with social life, it is not good form to question the wisdom of distinguishing food from poison by eating it or to ask who is to experiment and who to be experimented upon.

Of course there *is* thinking—at least there is mental process expressed in sentences which have subjects and predicates—along with the battle-cries. As reasoning, however, it is sometimes hard—for one with an old-fashioned education (or "reactionary" political sentiments!)—to follow. Thus the favourite American recipe for curing the depression is to encourage employment by forcing up wages, and revive business by increasing its costs, while guarding against a corresponding rise in prices. Again, the bulk of the unemployment being in the industries producing for investment needs, everything must be done to throttle investment and increase the demand for products for immediate consumption. The latest broadcast from the Leader in Washington argues that because "the people in this country whose

incomes are less than $2,000 a year buy more than two-thirds of all goods sold here, [therefore] it is logical that if the total amount that goes in wages to this group of human beings is steadily increased, merchants, employers, and investors will in the long run get more income from the increased volume of sales." Thus employers are to be aided by forcibly transferring incomes from them to wage-earners; what general effects the indirect procedure followed would probably have, is another matter, too far from the workings of the political mind to be inquired into here.

It will be seen that such analysis tends to imply criticism. This is utterly foreign to our intent. The point is simply the difficulty of understanding intellectually the political process when it takes on such forms. The first business of a political leader is to keep on being a political leader, and his acts and words are to be appraised solely from the point of view of their effectiveness to that end. Rather to be criticized is the familiar habit of criticizing politicians for playing good politics. This is palpably stupid. For a politician to do what the voters do not like is neither possible nor conformable to democratic ideals. Whoever is leader will play politics; the business of the student is merely to find out what is good politics, and why.

To the critical historian, the acts of individuals seem to be more the effects, or incidental accompaniments, of fundamental changes than determining factors. As to the underlying causes, the most we know is that our knowledge and understanding are very limited, that we have no clear conception of the material that is changing, or of the forces, processes, or laws of change. Yet we must and will try to understand the historical changes of the past and, by their light, those we are going through.

Statements as to the limited achievements to date and the difficulties of the problem must in no wise be taken as pessimistic. If intelligence is to accomplish anything, it must both face candidly its mistakes in the past and appraise critically the inherent limits of its power.

For the first two years or so after the economic crisis of 1929, I was one of the large group of students of economics who contemned the idea that this was fundamentally different from other depressions. But I have become convinced that I was in error, that we are actually in the course of one of the world's great economic and political revolutions. Even if we see some business revival, it will be limited and temporary. The nineteenth-century liberal system is played out, and the world of West-European civilization, based on political "democracy" and economic "freedom," will go through a drastic revaluation of its "modern" ideas and values. This change leads backward historically, toward some combination of nationalism—though a nationalism different from that of the post-Renaissance centuries—and to a quasi-religious intellectual absolutism, comparable to, yet different from that of the Middle Ages.

The significance of this for education is profound. If the civilization of the visible future is to be more like that of the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries than that of the nineteenth, the most important thing for youth to be taught to-day is that most of what the writings of our fathers treated as established is for the future the opposite of the truth. Natural science and scientific technology may not go backwards to a serious extent—they are too important for war!—but the conditions of free initiative under which they are studied and applied will be entirely changed; and in everything connected with political life ideals will be practically inverted. Fixity will take

the place of progress, security that of adventure; individuality, independence, and diversity will make way for conformity, uniformity, and unity; consequently, love of truth will give place to loyalty, and love of liberty to an unquestioning obedience to authority. The basic mystery of the relation between thinking and social process could have no better illustration than the fact that those who are striving most zealously to bring this about are liberals, and though predominantly educated (as well as honourable) men—even professors of social science in universities—they think they are working to promote freedom and democracy.

III

The evidence for all this can only be suggested. The first item would be the course of events—Russia, Italy, Germany, Japan, *etc.*, and then America, England, and France. More important is the visible decay of the ideal of liberty. Particularly noteworthy is the shift of radical reformism away from the democratic faith, the decline of Socialism in favour of Communism (which was in evidence long before the War), while even professed democratic Socialists hasten to disclaim the "fetish of legality." An argument perhaps intrinsically stronger, if less tangible on the face of it, is the *a priori* presumption that, as in the age of democracy the cure for any weakness shown by democratic institutions was always to make them more democratic, it is much more inevitable that the cure for any weakness of planning and regulation will be more regulation and a further concentration of power. The movement toward "control" once under way, we must surely expect for the visible future a process of plugging the holes in the system.

But the strongest, and in my own mind, the con-

clusive argument, is to be drawn from the inherent impossibility of nineteenth-century civilization itself, to certain essential features of which the social science of the age was strangely blind. From the vantage point of the present, we can see that only a remarkable accidental and inherently temporary set of conditions made it possible, for a time, for such a "free" social system—private initiative in economic life and government through representative institutions—to seem to work, or seem to have the capacity of solving the problem of combining liberty with order. Democracy, such as it was, was possible only in so far as there were no vital political problems, no serious differences of opinion or conflicts of interest. Whenever a democratic nation confronted such a problem as a foreign war, democracy folded up as a matter of course; and any really serious internal problem, such as slavery in the United States, had also to be settled by fighting to the exhaustion of the weaker party.

The conditions under which free government was possible, meaning under which there were no serious political issues, were an incident of the "frontier." The geographical discoveries and technical inventions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries relieved social and economic pressures in the countries of Western Europe. With an essentially unlimited domain awaiting economic conquest, life ceased to be seriously competitive for individuals. A practically unbounded sphere of action and of self-aggrandizement was open for any and all with sufficient energy and ambition to count seriously in social or political affairs. Such a world could be individualistic, and would naturally tend toward individualism—while the situation continued. It did so, and experienced a brief period of "freedom," a literal

"withering away of the state." But with the filling up of the world and the passing of frontier conditions, requirements would revert to older norms of stability through discipline. That is essentially what has happened though other changes, more or less predictable concomitants of the same development, have contributed to the resurgence of the state and of politics.

This reasoning may help us to grasp our present situation, but it is not encouraging as regards the capacity of intelligence to create social science. For it is essentially hindsight. None of this was seen by the leaders of the old order itself, whether political or intellectual and scientific. On the contrary, "everyman" was taught to view the state of liberty as a solid achievement which would both live and grow, and so was encouraged to live in a fool's paradise. Under the conditions of the moment, the problem of making a success in life was primarily that of exploiting nature, rather than other men, as normally in the world. The individual's requirements for getting ahead, were enterprise, technical capacity, and a minimum of small-scale organizing ability. Thought habits and moral ideals were moulded accordingly, especially in the New World. Intellectually, the age became one of "scientificism," and of "management;" in philosophy it was the age of utilitarianism, which evolved, in America, around the end of the century, into pragmatism, the antithesis of philosophy, philistinism transformed into a cult.

IV

If the intellectual leadership of nineteenth-century society failed to grasp the underlying physical situation, it failed just as egregiously to understand the spiritual

foundations of its own institutions. In liberal society, as in any other, these were mainly unconscious or emotional. Social behaviour must always be largely habit, while of that part which receives conscious attention a large fraction must be based on sentiment and loyalty rather than on critical deliberation. Moreover, sentiment and loyalty must be not merely uncritical, but definitely above criticism, protected from intellectual examination by social sanctions. The objects of loyalty must be sacred. In other words, next to unconscious tradition, *religion* is the foundation of social order.

The religious basis of liberalism was peculiar in that it was separated almost completely from current professions and practices of a formally religious sort, those which were current being a survival from an age and culture long past and thoroughly repudiated. The real spiritual foundations of the social order had been laid in the early "modern" centuries following the "Middle" or "Dark" Ages, as this past civilization was disparagingly called, the process culminating in the eighteenth century, the "Age of Reason." But rationalism is as emotional and anti-critical—as religious—as any other creed. Liberalism considered itself intellectual because it was based on a religion of irreligion, of intelligent self-seeking (verbally reconciled with deistical professions in the maxim that God helps those who help themselves). In all ideas and practices relating to the supersensible, there was in theory the utmost tolerance, showing that these things were not taken seriously in connection with the problems of social life.[1]

But the religion of liberalism had a positive social-

[1]Professor Tawney tells us that a nineteenth-century prime minister met a protesting church delegation with a remonstrance to the effect that things had come to a pretty pass if religion was going to interfere in the affairs of everyday life.

moral content, read into the notion of intelligence (in somewhat Socratic fashion). This was the sanctity of property. Only on such a basis could the *ordre naturel* of the French *économistes* or Adam Smith's "obvious and simple system of natural liberty" exist and function.[2] This unexamined, emotional-religious absolute which, objectively viewed, is Property, was generally called by the more appealing name of Liberty. It is a purely negative idea, meaning freedom to use power, and without power, completely empty. As gradually came to be frankly stated, the liberty of liberalism is "the right to do as one wills with one's own." The economic individual has but two attributes, will and power, or in economic terms, wants and property. Property, in turn, includes two kinds, the personal capacities, having salable value, of the biological human unit himself, and rights to and over external things. Property is a part of personality, or personal capacities are owned, as one may choose to look at it.[3] The essential content of

[2]As has often been pointed out, the economic laws were conceived in much the same way as the principles of Newtonian mechanics, *i.e.*, as having a similar significance for society to that which the Newtonian principles had for cosmology. The basic difference, that the operation of the Newtonian principles does not depend on their recognition or acceptance, still less their enforcement by man, was overlooked. But this is a phenomenon so common in social thinking as to be almost typical.

[3]It is a mere accident, and true only within limits, that incomes from property are larger than incomes from labour, and represent a greater quantity of power. The peculiar weakness of the position of one who owns earning power only in the form of personal capacities is, somewhat paradoxically, a consequence of the guarantee of personal freedom, general in modern nations, but logically not a part of the property system; in fact, it is a limitation on the ownership of one's own person. Because of such "inalienable rights" a man cannot "capitalize" his earning power because a contract to deliver labour in the future will not be enforced. Hence, one who has no other source of income can satisfy current needs only by the current sale of services; he has no power to "wait." Also, the ethical contrast commonly drawn by radical critics of the competitive system between the two forms of exchange power, labour and property, or their respective incomes, is almost entirely false. Both sources of income arise genetically from similar unanalysable mixtures of inheritance, conscientious effort, and luck.

property as a constitutional principle is a sacred immunity from interference either by society itself through political agencies, or by other individuals. The latter immunity is, like other sanctities, enforced by political sanctions.

V

Under liberal theory, the rôle of government and government itself were reduced to a minimum. The positive tasks of social organization were to be turned over to an automatic, two-stage system of markets which was rapidly developing, the system which economists call free enterprise. Competition of business firms in buying productive services and selling products should guarantee the use of productive capacity in the manner yielding the greatest want-satisfaction on the whole. The state would get by taxation its small share, needed to support its limited functions, chiefly the protection of property and enforcement of contract, plus certain general services to the economic system.[4]

Thus were reversed a number of the main assumptions of previous political thinking. The notion of the universal conflict of economic interests gave place to a presumption of mutual advantage. The view of the state as an entity with its own ends and of the main social problem as that of getting individuals to subordinate, to a requisite degree, their private purposes to these ends—with the corollary that economic problems were a subordinate part of political—gave place to the conception of the state as a means to individual ends, of politics as a subdivision of economics, and of the main

[4]The classical exposition of the new doctrine in its positive aspect was Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, published in 1776. Interestingly enough, the political and legal theory had been stated in a series of classics, well in advance of the formulation of the economic theory by Smith. The leading names are, of course, Locke, Montesquieu, and Blackstone.

political problem as the negative one of preventing government from interfering unduly with private affairs.

The political side of these new ideas is democracy, —government by elected officials. Much the most thorough-going embodiment in an actual constitution naturally occurred in the United States of America, a new nation starting relatively free from older traditions, populated predominantly from the European country most advanced in the liberal direction (and indeed with people selected in large measure for an attitude of dissent), and also immediately dominated by frontier conditions. There the political constitution followed through on the principle of "checks and balances," assuring a government able to preserve "law and order" but prevented from undertaking positive functions which would interfere with liberty. To the founding fathers this connection between democracy and economic *laissez-faire* was so obvious that they were hardly conscious of it.

In Western Europe the political evolution was toward democracy in the American sense.

VI

The system seemed to work fairly well in the political and economic spheres while frontier conditions lasted. Certainly the world has never seen anything comparable to the nineteenth century, or to America, in the way of scientific and technical progress, particularly the diffusion of material well-being over the general population, and many sorts of humanitarian advance. If the results were not so satisfying from the standpoint of "culture" taken in a more aesthetic sense, there were grounds for generous allowances in the present and hope for the future. (And pre-liberal and Old-World civilizations were not actually all pure beauty and refinement.)

Turning points are never points, and evidences of fundamental change go back at least to the first English factory acts. But it is interesting that not far from the date usually given for the "passing of the frontier" in the New World, we begin to hear in Britain of a New Liberalism essentially antithetical to the old, repudiating the automatic economic order and substituting the positive care and activity of the state as a main reliance for securing the realization of fundamental human values. The new liberalism, however, retained the faith in democratic forms for carrying out its constructive programme, an idea which would have been unintelligible to the founders of liberalism in France, America, or Britain itself. The corresponding political development was the creation of an expert civil service, otherwise known as a bureaucracy; government was to be conducted by "experts," men with special technical and administrative competence. The rôle of the people would be restricted to choosing legislative representatives who would determine general policies, and this power of choice would maintain "responsibility."

VII

But there is an ambiguity amounting to paradox in the theory of responsibility, which could be seen in the workings of the democratic machinery all through the nineteenth century, most clearly in the United States. The question was whether a political representative is supposed to do the *will* of his constituents or to act as a custodian of their *interests*, being guided in action by his own presumably superior knowledge and judgment. Whatever theory might say, the exigencies of political life forced professional politicians, as a condition of success, more and more to advocate and to inculcate in

the people the theory of direct democracy, the "rubber stamp" view of the representative function. But the result was that officials became more incompetent, and in addition, more corrupt. Platforms and pledges ran to verbiage, decreasing in content as they increased in length, and were taken less and less seriously. Political life appealed more and more exclusively to two main types, outright crusaders and self-seekers—the former not generally conspicuous for sound judgment, the latter either professional place-fillers, power-lovers (overlapping with crusaders), or servants of special interests. A new word, "graft," quickly became one of the most used items in the political vocabulary.

The mystery is not that representative institutions were discredited, but that any other result could have been expected. The agency relation presents a problem for which there is no mechanical or intellectual solution, while direct democracy, on any considerable scale and with positive functions, is out of the question. To illustrate the first point, we need only look at the problem of selecting a physician.[5] A patient who would choose his doctor scientifically would, in the first place, have himself to know all medical science, or at least all that known to any and all candidates for the place, and in addition know just the amount of this knowledge possessed by each candidate. But this is only half the story, and perhaps the smaller half. Our poor patient would further be required to know the degree in which each candidate would use his knowledge in his, the patient's, interest.

If the problem of competence in an agent admits of no solution because of its magnitude and complexity, that of the moral factor admits of none, of an intellectual

[5] *Cf. Faust*, Part I, ll. 1022-63.

sort, by its very nature. One who is to act for another with special competence, superior to that of his principal, and with fidelity, must be picked for competence and trustworthiness by some intuitive process, and must then be trusted. Sanctions of the sorts found in every society no doubt help in securing trustworthiness. About all these matters we have little knowledge, and the one thing that can be said with assurance is that (peace to the shade of Jeremy Bentham!) no machinery of sanctions can conceivably function without very large aid from moral forces.

Turning from the agency relation to the process of decision by a group as such (direct democracy), we confront the vast problem of the group mind and its changes, conscious and unconscious, or in other words the problem of history. Our concern here is with the rôle of specialized intelligence with respect to understanding and influencing historical change. On this topic, only two brief observations are possible. The first has to do with the theory underlying nineteenth-century liberalism. The suggestion in Smith's famous phrase, "the invisible hand," received more definite content nearly a century later from Darwin and Spencer in the conception of natural selection among spontaneous variations. To make it fit the social process the theory must be modified by recognizing that both in initiating variations and in selection, intelligence is assumed to be involved, but the mechanism has the same automatic beneficence. The individual is free (if he has, or can get from others by mutual agreement, the necessary resources) to "start" any change in the production and marketing of economic services, and similarly, to advocate any change in the laws or constitution. In the economic field the change survives or grows to the extent

that it is selected by consumers' expenditures, in competition with other uses of income, old and new. A suggestion for political change survives only if it is selected for the group in question as a whole, by the democratic political machinery as it actually exists and functions. To insure that only intelligent changes from the group standpoint will be made, the theory relies on the selective process; if initiation is unintelligent, as shown by failure of selection, the initiator's effort is wasted, but society is not materially affected.

On the political side, the error is that the people cannot select either ideas or leaders intelligently and are disposed to prejudice and hero worship rather than thinking or judgment. That the theory must presently break down on the economic side, in the absence of considerable political management, could have been predicted by fairly simple economic analysis, if any such had been forthcoming. Discussion there was in abundance, but that which got any hearing was a mixture of crude analysis with shallow apologetic, or with criticism of a sort to distract attention from the real weaknesses of the system,[6] or even with both. The criticism typically took the form of debating advocacy of alternatives obviously worse, particularly that of substituting for the system of organization through free markets the political bureaucracy. But one of the most fundamental weaknesses of the market system is the use of persuasive influence by sellers upon buyers and a general excessive tendency to produce wants for goods rather than goods for the satisfaction of wants. Influencing men's judg-

[6]It is impossible to go into this economic analysis here. The basic fact is that, in the absence of preventive measures, concentration of wealth (aggravated by inheritance) and still more concentration of power (through organization) would be inevitable and must before long smother the competitive process in monopoly and other impediments to readjustment.

ment, however, is almost the essence of democratic political process, and is definitely more sinister where the advocate appeals to men in the mass, and they decide in the mass, rather than individually.[7] To substitute competitive politics for competitive business is to jump out of the frying pan into the fire. No possible "machinery" will preserve responsibility without actual crowd rule, or will give political guidance (or even finally preserve order, once the traditional-religious basis of order is broken up) in the absence of moral leadership (good or bad) accepted as such by the masses. The real break-down of *bourgeois* society is only superficially economic: as a structural break-down it is rather political, since indisputably it is the business of the political system to make the economic system function; fundamentally, however, the break-down is not structural at all, but moral. The intellectual mistake of liberalism was two-fold: it failed to see that the social problem is not at bottom intellectual, but moral, and it utterly misconceived the genuinely intellectual element involved. Individual intelligence in the instrumentalist sense, so far from being a solution of the problem, is a perfect formula for the war of each against all.

The crux of current change lies in the loss of faith in intelligence as an agency for social problem-solving; it manifests the inevitable downfall of the religion of individual intelligence. First to fall of the idols erected to this religion were faith in the automatic competitive system and the belief in the supreme political competence of the untutored plain man, the special romanticism

[7]Adam Smith seems not to have thought of advertising and salesmanship, which developed long after his death. The founding fathers of democracy, notably in America, thought of campaigning, though apparently not of political party "machines;" but their careful provisions against the crowd mind were soon condemned as anti-democratic and did not count for long in a system which actually put the crowd in power.

of Rousseau. Then universal education became the panacea. Faith in the natural capacity or educability of the masses was not much longer-lived, and emphasis was shifted from mass education to the training of leaders. Then the problem was teachers for the leaders, and how to get the trained leaders to lead and others to follow—the problem of agency added to that of mass decision. Education provides no formula by which a society can lift itself culturally by its bootstraps, and the faith in education now appears as one of the most pathetic items in the entire creed of liberalism.

Loss of faith in intellectual leaders was followed by the final step, a turning away from belief in the very reality of truth. For a generation, left-wing political agitation has preached that "sound" and "unsound" doctrine in economics and politics mean the advocacy of the special interest of the proponent (though why or in what sense it should be "class" interest is a mystery); orthodoxy is merely the doctrine favourable to the dominant social class. And not different is the dominant academic philosophy, in the United States specifically, for this is the meaning in the social field of the pragmatic test of truth.

VIII

This leads to the final observation referred to, in connection with which a constructive suggestion may be offered. In the doctrine of liberalism the theory of natural selection by an invisible hand applies to the intellectual, aesthetic, and spiritual, and even to the religious life, as well as to the economic and political. Anyone is free to propose "variations," and advocate them, within wide limits, by any sort of arguments. It is assumed that selection by the ultimate consumer

will produce agreement on the "fittest" alternative where agreement is requisite, or otherwise will select what is fittest for the particular individual or group. In the intellectual field, the issue is especially acute, since the notion of truth implies that it is the same for all. Moreover, the field of public policy is peculiar in that there *must* be agreement; it is *impossible* for each to have it his own way. But under liberalism, political truth is decided by mass judgment selecting among opinions or personalities advocated under conditions of free competition.

It is perhaps in economics that, within the field of culture, the largest element of impersonal truth is presumed and that there is the largest necessity for social policy. Trained economists have been put in the position of appealing to the crowd against each other, of making the crowd the judge of their intellectual differences. Selection has tended to staff the profession with persons who accept this democratic process as the final and right method of reaching intellectual validity. The tendency is cumulative. It places increasing pressure on the diminishing remnant of minds interested in getting the right answers to problems to enter the forum where the issues are really determined and where they see a growing majority of their professional colleagues engaged in the only activity which can either be practically significant or afford any community of intellectual life, or even, in the not-very-long run, any chance to live by one's work. It is surely unnecessary to explain here that what this process selects is not truth, but effective technique in persuading the crowd, and that it can only eventuate, as we have seen it do, in the destruction of the notion of truth in any matter connected with public

policy. And of course the attitude tends to spread to other fields.

Our suggestion, then, is that a few people in the fields most directly affected, such as economics, might recognize this situation and deliberately stand out against it, striving to preserve in a small area an atmosphere of co-operative critical truth-seeking, apart from mutual destruction in public controversy. There must be no delusion that this is easy. The purely intellectual difficulties are stupendous. Even material obstacles are considerable, for intellectual intercourse must be costly where it does not result in a marketable product. But the really serious difficulty is moral. We are all children of our age, the age of liberalism, the age of publicity and of personal competition. We are all soaked in the tradition of "fighting for the truth," which implies that truth is defined by victory, and puts love of victory, which is easy, in place of love of truth, which is hard. A genuine religious conversion would be necessary for most or all of the members of any group which should really devote itself to love of truth and faith in truth. They must both renounce personal emoluments and resist the temptation to place power behind truth, which actually tends rather to prostitute truth to power.

There is no backward yearning for any golden age in this suggestion. There has never been any promotion of truth (practically speaking) which was not connected with promotion of the promoter as a human individual. Yet the problem is a new one, as the idea of social direction by popular discussion is new. It was created in the first place by the printing press and then by modern civilization, which drew the whole population, willy-nilly, into the discussion of questions previously reserved for specialists. This is not the place for details as to

how to meet the difficulties. But it would seem that it ought to be possible to have a political and economic science, on some scale, which would not rest on a competition among those of special competence in "selling" to the public ideas and doctrines which they cannot sell to each other.

THE CIVIL SERVICE OF CANADA

W. L. Grant

THE last fifty years have seen a great change in our conception of the state and its functions. According to Lord Melbourne the functions of the state in time of peace were "to keep order and to enforce the sanctity of contracts," and in spite of his ability to extemporize life-long convictions, and to exhibit startling inconsistencies, Mr. Gladstone had essentially the same policeman's conception. Their belief, in some ways a splendid belief, in the individual, their desire to free mankind from the shackles of an outworn feudalism, led the Victorians to hold this negative conception of the state, and to think that positive results would best be attained by the unchecked activity of vigorous individuals.

How far away it all sounds! Russia has become Communist; Germany and Italy are totalitarian. Great Britain, "swearing she would n'er consent, consented," and while still in part individualist, has embarked on so vast a programme of social services, that she is to-day the best example of the social service state.

Even in Canada, which has to some extent lagged behind, we do not always recognize how far we have gone. The believer in rugged individualism rises in the morning and turns on the electric light provided by a Hydro-Electric Commission established by a combination of the municipalities and the province. He washes in water provided by the municipality. His breakfast is cooked by the same hydro-provided electricity. He goes to his office in a municipally-operated street car. If he wishes to send home for the party that evening a bottle or two

of whisky or a dozen of beer, he purchases it from a Provincial Liquor Commission. Arriving at the office he finds a telegram sent by government wire, and numerous letters delivered by the government post-office. The wire may possibly compel him to look up the trains of the Canadian National Railway.

And the end is not yet. It is sufficiently clear that the days of unchecked *laissez-faire* have gone. The handwriting is on the wall. Big business has all too quickly exhausted the soil of goodwill in which it grew up. Investigations in the United States and Canada have convinced most of us that unchecked big business means unchecked economic slavery. While it is unlikely that we shall fly to either Communism or Fascism as a refuge, at least the government must come in as a make-weight. If we wish to retain the vigour of individualism, we must at least have government activity to restrain and canalize it. There must be some form of planned economy, if possible one in which the virtues of individualism may flourish, but something very different from the unrestrained piracy of our gasoline and tobacco barons.

In this process of changing a negative conception of the state to a positive one, the Civil Service has played a prominent part, and in Canada must play an increasing one. The losses occasioned to the Soviet government in Russia by the lack of an efficient Civil Service and the necessity of organizing one out of the thousands of half-baked idealists who felt capable of putting Communist principles into practice, are astronomical. That Great Britain has been able to make such vast changes without a social cataclysm is due, not indeed wholly but in no small part, to the efficiency of the higher ranks of her Civil Service. As Mr. Laski, in his *Democracy in Crisis*, observes:

> The great change in the technique of the modern state in the last half-century has been the improvement in the quality of its administration. The change, indeed, in the character of the men chosen to staff the Civil Services of states like Great Britain, Germany, and France, to take only the outstanding examples, is remarkable. Most of the old and vicious system of patronage has gone; merit is the basis of admission to the service, and, granted the weaknesses of human nature, it may be said also to be easily the predominant motive in promotion. In the main, also, the tradition of the civil service has been one of neutrality. It has served whatever government has been in office with equal fidelity. And, as I have already pointed out, its devotion to its functions has been in a large degree responsible for the development of the positive state. The reports of British departments like the Ministry of Health, the Board of Education, and of those Royal Commissions which have owed so much of their quality to the zeal and ability of their unknown secretaries, have been a large factor in convincing the public mind that the development of the positive state was inevitable. To a very considerable extent that body of facts which ended the regime of "laissez-faire" was the discovery of the civil service.

How far in Canada have the developments in our Civil Service kept pace with the developments in our national life and in our conceptions of government? How far is our administration, federal, provincial, municipal, capable of grappling with such problems as unemployment insurance and relief, old age pensions, liquor control, hydro, and a dozen others?

The Civil Service of Canada has three main divisions, often interlinking and interlocking, but capable of being looked at separately: the ordinary routine or operative division, the technical division, and the administrative division. The largest division is the technical, including the myriad positions made necessary especially in agriculture and transport by the development of modern

science. The administrative division deals in its higher branches with the problems of government; under it come not only external affairs, but also all the economic problems in which the ablest and best-intentioned minister of the Crown needs so much expert and impartial guidance.

The first problem against which we came in Canada was that of interference by political partisans. Every reader of this article knows something about that side of our administration. We can all tell stories of the bankrupt tailor who was made a librarian, of the deputy minister who wanted a smart boy and was forced to take an elderly moron. Even the Great War did not quell the patronage-broker. When I went to England with my battalion, on the way to France, I was a man of over forty, with some small knowledge of the world. The extent to which politics was being played, the extent to which men were getting or losing promotion, the extent to which units were being kept together or broken up for political reasons was horrifying. If Sir Arthur Currie's or Sir Richard Turner's Reminiscences exist and are ever published, they will indeed be front-page news.

In a sense the harm done may be exaggerated. The average politician loves his country just as much as the average professor, and does not wish the appointment of incompetents. Even under an unrestrained patronage system, he tries to pick the best man of his own party who is available. We have had, under the patronage system, men in our Dominion and provincial and municipal services, who are not only competent, but who would do honour to any Civil Service in the world. The average Canadian has a fairly high standard of competence, and we get in our service the average Canadian. But a system in which men look for promotion, not to their competence or enthusiasm or learning but to political favouritism, is

self-condemned. The service was stuffed with mediocrities; hundreds of unnecessary positions were created; and the expert was discouraged. The moral debauchery, the growth of a spirit by which the Canadian was encouraged to look on his country as a buccaneer looked on a Spanish galleon, is sadly obvious.

Early in the history of confederation attacks were made on this system. Our first Civil Service reformer was Mr. George Casey, M.P. for West Elgin, who again and again brought the question before the House of Commons, and who succeeded in 1877 in having a Commission of Inquiry appointed. From then on the question was a live one. The story may be read in the admirable book of Professor R. MacGregor Dawson of the University of Saskatchewan.*

We had the McInnes Commission of 1881 and the Hague Commission of 1892. When Mr. (now Sir) Robert Borden became leader of the Conservative party, he made Civil Service reform a definite plank in his policy. In 1908 he forced on Sir Wilfrid Laurier the appointment of the Courtney Commission. The result was the appointment of a Civil Service Commission, consisting of Professor Adam Shortt of Queen's University and Mr. M. G. La Rochelle. The whole internal service, consisting of over four thousand employees resident in Ottawa, was supposedly taken out of politics and placed under this body. The appointment of this Commission is a landmark in the history of Canadian administration.

Why was it necessary to give to this Commission two heads, which have been increased to three? We have one prime minister, one ministerial head of each department. Our banks, our department stores, our trust companies, have each a single head. But in government adminis-

*Robert MacGregor Dawson, *The Civil Service of Canada*, Oxford University Press, 1929.

tration our federal system, and above all, the existence of our two official languages, which makes French and English demand each its proper share of the loaves and fishes, seems to doom us to commissions. It is a system under which the members of the Commission either squabble among themselves, and come to a deadlock, or attain unanimity by a series of compromises, by which politics driven out at the door comes back by the window.

How hard Professor Shortt worked, how nobly he was backed by Mr. William Foran, the secretary of the Commission, I know personally. At first the hordes of office-seekers could not understand it. They sat on Shortt's doorstep; they broke in on him as he walked to his office; they interrupted him as he sat at his meals. Some ministers supported him, but not all. Some men who are honoured in Canadian history will have to answer at the Judgment for the way in which they endeavoured to use him for base partisan purposes.

In any case the Act of 1908 applied only to the internal service: outside Ottawa patronage was still the law. In 1912, a Commission composed of Messrs. G. N. Ducharme and R. S. Lake reported in favour of placing the whole outside service under the Commission, and in the same year, an eminent British civil servant, Sir George Murray, made a very valuable report, in which he recommended that technical appointments should be placed in the hands of the Civil Service commissioners, and urged the adoption by Canada of some modification of the British system, by which men of high ability are introduced early into the service, as the result of examinations equivalent to the final honour examinations of a university.

The Great War necessitated large increases in the service, just when many of the most suitable appointees were overseas. The result was inevitably unsatisfactory

and in some ways scandalous; but when in 1917 the Union government came into power, with Sir Robert Borden at its head, the prime minister found himself able to carry out his old ideals. With the assistance of men like the Hon. N. W. Rowell, K.C., he went at the task whole-heartedly. The Acts of 1918 and 1919 put the whole outside service under the control of the Commission, and did all that acts of parliament could do to establish the merit system on a sure basis. It was a great piece of political righteousness, for which Sir Robert Borden deserves the highest praise. Some years later an excellent superannuation scheme was put into operation by the Liberal government of Mr. Mackenzie King. Friends of the merit system felt that they could breathe easily.

Not that the politician has been wholly eliminated. The chairman of the Parliamentary Special Committee of 1932, Mr. Earl Lawson, the Conservative member for West York, said very frankly:

> I am sure that I am not over-stating it, if I say that between fifty and a hundred civil servants, whom I never knew before lived in the Riding I represent,—and I am sure that the fifty or a hundred who interviewed me must represent the large bulk of the civil servants living in the Riding of West York—saw me within thirty days after the last election, and their one story was that they could never get ahead in the Civil Service, because they had been living in a Riding which was represented by a member of the Opposition, and now that a new Government was in, if they only had the little pull which I might put behind them, why everything would be rosy. . . . I have asked a dozen members if they have had the same experience, and they have informed me they have.

Undoubtedly the appointment by the Liberal government in 1925 of two highly unsuitable Civil Service commissioners, who have since been discharged, may have

had something to do with Mr. Lawson's experience; but whatever the defects of the present situation, there is no doubt that the Civil Service Acts of 1918 and 1919 did much to lessen political patronage in the federal field, even if they did not wholly extirpate it. In the provincial and municipal services, it still flourishes almost wholly unchecked.

The admirable Acts of 1918-9 had a less admirable sequel. Somewhat over forty thousand highly miscellaneous appointments had been suddenly brought under the Commission, and had to be classified. It was a very difficult job, requiring a mixture of *expertise* and common sense. Unfortunately, Sir Robert Borden, overworked and weary, turned the matter over to the Commission. Still more unfortunately the Commission, apparently not daring to ask parliament to enlarge its staff, selected an American firm of supposed experts. In due time these presented their report, which brought the whole inside service and much of the outside service to the brink of rebellion. With a tremendous show of efficiency, it classified every position, but did so on an elaborate vertical system, only partially suitable for the technical services, and wholly unsuitable for the administrative. Had we had a Standing Committee of the House, to which their report could have been referred, the harm might have been undone. But we had no such Standing Committee. The report was indeed discussed in the House of Commons; but the voice of wisdom was lost in clamour about individual cases. The root principles of administration were lost sight of. The report was thrown back to the Commission, who amended it, partly for the better, partly, if possible, for the worse.*

*In 1929-30, a Commission was appointed under Mr. Edward Beatty to improve the stratification of the service. Its preliminary report, published in 1930, was written chiefly by Professor Gilbert Jackson of the University of Toronto. It did a good deal to straighten out anomalies in the technical branches, but left the administrative till later. Since then it has been disbanded.

The whole idea seems to have been to bring into the service not young men and women of high general intelligence, who could soon learn the monkey-tricks which constitute the routine of office, but expert floor-cleaners, office-boys, typists, filing-clerks, *etc.* The examination system which Professor Shortt and his successor, Dr. Roche, had set up, and which was at least of a sufficiently high standard to insure that only those of average ability and education could pass it, was scrapped. I have before me the sample examination papers published by the Civil Service Commission in 1932. If I wished to discourage any able young man or woman from entering the service of his country, I could hardly improve upon this volume. Under this terrible handicap the present commissioners do their best. In their report of 1933 they refer plaintively to

> the desirability of appointing to the Service each year a certain number of persons possessed of somewhat higher educational qualifications and broader general capacity than those obtained by the normal examinations to the lower clerical and manipulative grades of the service. In Great Britain this is done by means of an examination designed to secure a certain number of appointees of the University graduate type. During the years 1908-1917 similar results were secured in Canada by means of what were then known as Second Division Examinations.

Elsewhere they speak of the number of civil servants who entered during those years under this type of examination, who now hold important positions.

Not only are the examinations of this deadly type, but the course of promotion tends to run along the same lines. An egg-inspector of the second grade may become an egg-inspector of the first grade. But if an egg-inspector of the second grade gives promise of having high administrative qualities of a more general type, it is extremely

difficult to transfer him to a position where he may employ them in the service of his country. It can be done, and the present commissioners do their best; but it is more difficult than it should be.

We have occasionally a way in Canada of adopting an American practice just when the Americans themselves are outgrowing it; and never did we do so more flagrantly than in this case. A man above the average in intelligence, and with his mentality at least partially disciplined by a university training to the proper method of tackling a problem, can be changed from department to department, and his disciplined mind will make him of value, even if he has to spend some short time in picking up the office routine. But a dullard, even if he has painfully acquired proficiency in some minute branch of floor-polishing or letter-filing, remains to the end only a polished dullard.

What does a Civil Service need in modern times? Doubtless most of its employees will never rise above routine duties; but it also needs a fertilizing stream of good brains, such as go yearly from the British universities into the British service. Any ordinary Canadian will do at one end of the bell-wire, but the man at the other end who pushes the bell should have higher qualifications. We need civil servants who can brief the over-worked minister; we need men who in these days of stress have leisure to think and brains with which to pursue the toilsome and difficult operation of thinking consecutively; men who can keep two or three jumps ahead of the game, instead of being overwhelmed with day-to-day routine. Of such men we have a few but all too few in the Civil Service of Canada, and our system does not make it easy for such men either to get in or to win promotion. The result is that men like Dr. Skelton or Mr. W. C. Clark

have to be jobbed in. Once in they do honour to their positions; but their appointments add another nail to the coffin, in which are buried the hopes of those of us who would like to see the same fertilizing stream of young men go from the universities of Canada to the service of their country as go in Great Britain.*

There are a hundred other points awaiting discussion. But one thing must be said. Many men of originality and force distrust "the Civil Service mind." Lately Lord Hewart has complained bitterly of the encroachments of the civil servant upon the liberties of Englishmen. Mr. Ramsay Muir has written a book to prove that the new bureaucrat may lay on these liberties a heavier hand than did the feudal baron. It may be so in England. It may be that the strengthening of the Civil Service in Canada may go so far that fifty years from now my successor will have to inveigh against the bureaucrat. But that is in the future. At present we are suffering not from undue *expertise*, but from administrative mediocrity, from the doctrine that any man is good enough for a government job, from too complete a divorce between the universities and the service of the country. Mr. Bennett, Mr. King, and Mr. Woodsworth could get together and in twenty-four hours appoint a Commission, largely composed of university men, like themselves, which with the help of the present Civil Service commissioners could in six months reorganize the present iniquitous examination system and the whole vertical system of promotions. That is at present the central sore from which a stream of mediocrity seeps into our whole federal administration.

*It is true that such positions as trade commissioner, or clerk in the Department of External Affairs, and many of the positions in the technical branches, tend to attract university men of a good type, and that the examinations set the candidate are of a high standard. But even these are specialized examinations, and do not necessarily sift out men who could on occasion be promoted to the higher branches of the administrative service.

THE POETIC GENIUS OF D. H. LAWRENCE

HERBERT DAVIS

IN the last four years since Lawrence died a good deal has been written about him by his friends and admirers, clamouring sometimes with little restraint or discretion to prove their priority in interest or affection or understanding, providing sometimes, it is true, fresh biographical information and valuable additions to the *Letters*, edited by Mr. Aldous Huxley in 1932, but rarely aiding us to form a critical estimate of his real importance. That importance, however, assumed of course by all his admirers, is perhaps almost as clearly indicated by the attitude of his critics. Whether approached from the point of view of a traditional moralist like Mr. T. S. Eliot and condemned as a seeker after strange gods, or from the point of view of a metabiological Christian like Mr. Middleton Murry and condemned as a prophet who betrayed his vision, or from the point of view of a cultured man of the world like Mr. Norman Douglas and condemned as something of an outsider, Lawrence is still recognized by them all as a genuine artist, and as a man whose experience of life has a real validity for this generation. And Professor Cazamian, too, though finding in Lawrence's work an absence of the balance and perfection of the greatest art, speaks, in the last issue of the QUARTERLY, of the powerful fascination of his "tormented genius" which "seems to bear the very shape and show the pressure of our age."

At this point, therefore, we are naturally inclined to inquire further in order to discover the nature of Lawrence's genius and the place of this outsider in the recent developments of English poetry and fiction. So far it

seems to me that the most valuable assistance has been provided by Mr. Aldous Huxley, in his introduction to the *Letters*, and by Mr. Horace Gregory in his recent critical study.* I like Mr. Huxley's attitude, because he is ready to accept Lawrence on his own terms. For example, finding him fantastically unreasonable on the subject of scientific evidence, he is content to avoid such barren disputes altogether:

> Lawrence could give so much, and what he gave was so valuable, that it was absurd and profitless to spend one's time with him disputing about a matter in which he absolutely refused to take a rational interest. Whatever the intellectual consequences, he remained through thick and thin unshakably loyal to his own genius. The *daimon* which possessed him was, he felt, a divine thing, which he would never deny or explain away, never even ask to accept a compromise. This loyalty to his own self, or rather to his gift, to the strange and powerful *numen* which, he felt, used him as its tabernacle, is fundamental in Lawrence and accounts, as nothing else can do, for all that the world found strange in his beliefs and his behaviour.

Lawrence was indeed very sure of his work, and emphatic in his claims; but he states them quite simply, and never indulges in ridiculous poses. In replying to a letter of stiff criticism from Edward Garnett concerning a first draft of *The Rainbow*, he says:

> I am not after all a child working erratically. All the time, underneath, there is something deep evolving itself out in me. And it is *hard* to express a new thing, in sincerity. . . . [P]rimarily I am a passionately religious man, and my novels must be written from the depth of my religious experience. That I must keep to, because I can only work like that.

It is the same sincere belief that prompts him to say later: "The novels and poems come unwatched out of one's pen. They are pure passionate experience."

*Horace Gregory, *Pilgrim of the Apocalypse*, Martin Secker, 1934.

This is not particularly unusual; it is the language of the main Romantic tradition. Mr. Gregory recognizes this, and is, I think, eminently successful in his attempt "to interpret Lawrence's work as one might deal with the remains of any other major Romantic poet." For "poetry lies close to the root of everything he had to say. Unconsciously, but unerringly, I think, he followed in the tradition of the great Romantic English poets and believed with Shelley that the distinction between poetry and prose was a vulgar error."

If now with this in mind we turn to those records of his boyhood and youth in the early poems and in *Sons and Lovers*, we cannot fail to recognize immediately all the characteristics of the young romantic, "full of life, and warm," with an intense hunger and thirst for all that life seems to offer; but, with his delicate torturing sensitiveness, shrinking from the first touch of everything, and when forced into contact with the hard ugliness of experience, protecting itself by clownishness and loutish tricks. From his childhood we see him entering into full possession of the world of beauty, the visionary world where there is nothing to revolt from, nothing to bring the ugly look into his face, but a full response to all his desire for warmth and life. In this world all is aglow with the luminous purpose of God like the subtle rush of cool gray flame in a picture of Corot:

> The subtle, steady rush of the whole
> Grey foam-mist of advancing God,
> As He silently sweeps to His somewhere, His goal,
> Is heard in the grass of the sod.
>
> Is heard in the windless whisper of leaves
> In the silent labours of men in the fields,
> In the downward dropping of flimsy sheaves
> Of cloud the rain skies yield.
>
> . . . . . .

Since God sweeps onward dim and vast,
Creating the channeled vein of Man
And Leaf for His passage, His shadow is cast
On all for us to scan.

Ah listen, for Silence is not lonely;
Imitate the magnificent trees
That speak no word of their rapture, but only
Breathe largely the luminous breeze.*

Even the new houses of the city in the morning after rain are "a cluster of lilies glittering in scarlet," and even the labourers at work near the railway siding are transformed into splendid coloured figures, playing a lovely game:

A gang of labourers on the piled wet timber
That shines blood-red beside the railway siding
Seem to be making out of the blue of the morning
Something faery and fine, the shuttles sliding,

The red-gold spool of their hands and faces shuttling
Hither and thither across the morn's crystalline frame
Of blue: trolls at the cave of ringing cerulean mining,
And laughing with work, living their work like a game.*

And when he leaves behind the dreary mining village and the pitheads with their heaps of shale and clanking wheel, and goes down into the marsh-lands on the borders of Derby and Nottinghamshire, with their rich lush pastures, he seems to sense with his whole body the warmth of that primitive life of man and beast, a fresh luxuriant growth beneath the sun and rain, and rooted deeply in the ground. This feeling glows through the Miriam poems and in many of the pages of *Sons and Lovers*, and finds its fullest expression later in the prose poem with which *The Rainbow* opens, describing the life at Brangwen Farm:

*Quoted from *Love Poems and Others* (1913). In the *Collected Poems* (1928) these verses are much altered.

> They felt the rush of the sap in spring, they knew the wave which cannot halt, but every year throws forward the seed to begetting, and, falling back, leaves the young-born on the earth. . . .
>
> They took the udder of the cows, the cows yielded milk and pulse against the hands of the men, the pulse of the blood of the teats of the cows beat into the pulse of the hands of the men. . . .
>
> They mounted their horses, and held life between the grip of their knees, they harnessed their horses at the wagon, and, with hand on the bridle-rings, drew the heaving of the horses after their will.

It is prose that works on the mind like an incantation, beating and ringing on our ears like a distant drumming. And it suits so admirably the kind of poetry which he pours out when there is no "clog in his soul's quick running," like a triumphant *Benedicite* to the glory of the great tide of life, which surges through all things. In his later books, whether in prose or verse, it is not so often found in its purity. But even when mingled with violent outbursts against the mortification and corruption of humanity as in that poem called *Craving for Spring*, which ends so magnificently the volume *Look! We Have Come Through*, the same exultant tone is heard gathering force and power, and finally soaring clear above all lingering disharmonies:

> I wish it were spring in the world. . . .
>
> I want the fine kindling wine-sap of spring. . . .
>
> This is the same that picks up the harvest of wheat
> and rocks it, tons of grain, on the ripening wind;
> the same that dangles the globe-shaped pleiads of fruit
> temptingly in mid-air, between a playful thumb and finger;
> oh, and suddenly, from out of nowhere, whirls the pear-bloom,
> upon us, and apple- and almond- and apricot- and quince-blossom,
> storms and cumulus clouds of all imaginable blossom

about our bewildered faces,
though we do not worship. . . .
I wish it were spring, thundering
delicate, tender spring.

What were the possibilities for a young man like this in the literary world of 1910? The successful writers were novelists like Wells and Galsworthy and Bennett. Naturally he began to write novels in the convention of the moment, and in *Sons and Lovers*, his third novel, succeeded because he could pour into it the experiences of his own youth. But he could not continue to write like that. As Virginia Woolf has pointed out in *Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown*, those were the wrong conventions for the young Georgian novelists like Mr. Forster or Lawrence. They not only could not compete with "Mr. Galsworthy's knowledge of the Factory Acts, and Mr. Bennett's knowledge of the Five Towns" and Mr. Wells's Utopian schemes for education, they did not want to. They were not interested in social and economic problems, or in political reforms. Such things were abstractions with which they had nothing whatever to do. They were concerned with their own direct sense of individual life, and the deeper inner problems of human relationships. They despised the sense of reality provided by the realists. They distrusted their methods and their tools; and they had to find or make others fitter for their purpose. Lawrence was himself very definitely conscious of this. Already in 1912 he writes to a friend who had sent him a copy of *Anna of the Five Towns*: "I hate Bennett's resignation. Tragedy ought really to be a great kick at misery. But *Anna of the Five Towns* seems like an acceptance—so does all the modern stuff since Flaubert. I hate it. I want to wash again quickly, wash off England, the oldness and grubbiness and despair." And a few months later, writing to

Edward Garnett, he stresses his reaction from the Edwardians: "I don't want to write like Galsworthy nor Ibsen, nor Strindberg, nor any of them, not even if I could. We have to hate our immediate predecessors, to get free from their authority."

It was not, I think, until he had written *The Sisters* in 1913—not published till six years later as *Women in Love*—that he began to discover what his own method would have to be. The letters to Garnett at that time are often anxious; he does not seem quite sure of himself yet, but he knows at least that he has no longer "joy in creating vivid scenes, accumulating objects in the powerful light of emotion, and making a scene of them," and that he will not write in the same manner as *Sons and Lovers* again—"in that hard, violent style full of sensation and presentation." It is clear, I think, what had happened. He was no longer struggling against his own nature to externalize his experience according to the realists' convention; he was now beginning to allow the poet full play to write as freely and directly as possible from immediate or remembered experience.

It seems to me that Lawrence had really one main purpose—to communicate his original poetic experience as unspoilt as possible by what he regarded as intellectual interference. He did not wish to translate his poetry into another medium; it was to be as far as possible a spontaneous overflow, a natural flowering of a life itself shaped as a work of art. What he dreamed of was a great humanity—as he once wrote in commenting on the experience of Van Gogh—

> where to live would be to create oneself, *in fact, be the artist creating a man in living fact* . . . and where the art was the final expression of the created animal or man—not the be-all and being of man—but the end, the climax. And some would end

> in artistic utterance, and some wouldn't. But each one would create the work of art, the living man, achieve that piece of supreme art, a man's life.

That is, I suppose, what Mr. Gregory means when he says: "He was, then, not so much an artist, but a particular kind of artist, a divine amateur, if you will, who wrote his books to save his soul." But it is a dangerous sentence in which to sum up his verdict upon Lawrence: the suggestion of amateurishness and a preoccupation with his own soul is very misleading. Lawrence was an unusual kind of artist, just because he was at all times so completely and wholeheartedly loyal to what may be called the specifically artistic mode of experience, so ready to sacrifice what were for him the devitalizing processes of all other modes of consciousness, intellectual, moral, or merely conventional. "The artist"—to borrow a statement from Mr. Richards's discussion of Art and Morals in his *Principles of Literary Criticism*—"is an expert in the 'minute particulars' and *qua* artist pays little or no attention to generalizations which he finds in actual practice are too crude to discriminate between what is valuable and the reverse. The artist is concerned with the record and perpetuation of the experiences which seem to him most worth having. . . . He is the point at which the growth of the mind shows itself."

It may at first sight seem a strange claim to assert that Lawrence was, above all else, and in a very rare fashion, "an expert in the minute particulars," concerned only with the individual and the concrete, never with the general and the abstract. But it will be, I think, readily admitted that his most vital experiences were on the sensuous and emotional plane. His senses are extraordinarily acute, especially the sense of touch; his whole nervous organism is almost torturingly responsive to

every shade of feeling from the most delicate to the most violent. And he was aware that this was his special gift —to experience things through touch and feeling. But you cannot touch abstractions, you cannot feel generalizations. Therefore he hated them, and despised, like most romantic poets and prophets, the mental consciousness, the rational method of knowledge: he felt that it destroyed his vital knowledge. Again and again he insists upon this difference, as in the following passage from *Apropos of Lady Chatterley's Lover*:

> The world of reason and science, the moon, a dead lump of earth, the sun, so much gas with spots: this is the dry and sterile little world the abstracted mind inhabits. The world of our little consciousness, which we know in our pettifogging *apartness*. This is how we know the world when we know it apart from ourselves, in the mean separateness of everything. When we know the world in togetherness with ourselves, we know the earth hyacinthine or Plutonic, we know the moon gives us our body as delight upon us, or steals it away, we know the purring of the great gold lion of the sun, who licks us like a lioness her cubs, making us bold, or else, like the red, angry lion, dashes at us with open claws. There are many ways of knowing, there are many sorts of knowledge. But the two ways of knowing, for man, are knowing in terms of apartness, which is mental, rational, scientific, and knowing in terms of togetherness, which is religious and poetic.

Lawrence never hesitated a moment between the two. He was singleminded in his devotion to the religious and poetic experience. He had no interest in anything else. But he was also an artist, and therefore compelled to discover some medium by which he could express that experience; and as a writer, he had to translate his vital knowledge into words, and therefore was in danger of intellectualizing it; and in this process, he felt his virtue going out of him. He was always beating against the limitations of language:

> Is there a great secret?
> Are our words no good?

And yet on the other hand he wrote rapidly, easily, with dangerous fluency; and he could never stop the flow of words, checking it, holding it back; he could never revise, he could only rewrite. And he would, I think, have admitted that a good deal of his writing was not the direct expression he wanted, but a sort of translation into another medium. Indeed, in the middle of *Aaron's Rod*, he stops to tell us that that is exactly what he is doing—translating Aaron's feelings:

> He was a musician. And hence even his deepest *ideas* were not word-ideas, his very thoughts were not composed of words and ideal concepts. . . . If I, as a word-user, must translate his deep conscious vibrations into finite words, that is my own business. I do but make a translation of the man. He would speak in music. I speak with words.

That might very well serve as a sort of half-conscious apology for long stretches of very feeble translation, which occur in many of the novels—interminable conversations, soliloquies, comment, which sufficiently demonstrate the inadequacy of his prose as a medium for his particular purpose. But he never remained content with translation; his work is a constant experiment to attain to direct expression both in prose and verse. He experiments with the use of mystical symbols in *The Crown* and in *Apocalypse*, with physiological symbols in *Fantasia of the Unconscious* and in some of the plays and poems, and in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* he uses his father's speech, the dialect of the Nottinghamshire miner. And, as we might expect, he succeeds in so far as he is able to use his symbols or the dialect poetically, "fusing mind and wit with all the senses" to express "the profound sensual experience of

truth." But even in the *Last Poems* we find once again the recognition of the mind's failure:

> A strange grey distance separates
> our pale mind from the pulsing continent
> of the heart of man.

And so he made one other attempt to penetrate the grayness by trying another medium altogether, adventurously taking up brush and paint to put upon canvas clear vivid glimpses of the life that he had seen and touched. But his place is nevertheless among the novelists and poets.

He had been forced, like Hardy, in order to make a living, to put what he had to say in the form of a volume which could be published as a seven-and-sixpenny novel, or in the form of short stories which would do for the literary monthlies. But that did not prevent him from throwing over most of the conventions of the English novel, and books like *The Rainbow*, *Women in Love*, *Aaron's Rod*, *Kangaroo*, and *The Plumed Serpent*, are really fragments of a vast autobiographical document, containing in their best pages vivid and immediate records of Lawrence in England during the War, and later in Italy, Australia, and Mexico. It would be, however, an exaggeration to say that they are entirely lyrical and subjective. Actually he did not abandon completely the earlier "hard, violent style full of sensation and presentation." The "joy in creating vivid scenes" which had in the beginning made him a novelist, did not leave him altogether, even if it is for the most part subordinated to his insistent purpose. And it is particularly interesting to notice that in many of the short stories—always the more popular of Lawrence's work—he was content to let the impulse have free play, and to allow it to work itself out in a more consciously controlled and neater shape. All the short stories moreover, which had originally ap-

peared in periodicals, were carefully rewritten before being published in book form.

And yet of the shorter narratives the most significant are still those which, like *Sea and Sardinia*, *Mornings in Mexico*, *Etruscan Places*, and above all that perfect piece of prose, *The Man Who Had Died*, are in closest connection with Lawrence's own experience. And nothing is, I think, more characteristic, both in its revelation of his particular poetic mode of experience and of his struggle to intellectualize it, to talk about it, or simply to let it flower as poetry, than that strange book, *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, written at the very height of his power in 1923. Here he admits the need for some sort of mental attitude towards oneself and things in general, and sets out deliberately to abstract some definite conclusions from his experiences as a writer and a man. And so he takes pencil and exercise-book and sits down under a tree in the Black Forest, and begins: "I may as well say straight off that I stick to the solar plexus." And then we plunge into sex and religion, and Jung and Freud and Bergson, and an attack on all Causes and Ideals, and a statement of his belief in the souls of the dead, with an apology for approaching anything so mystical: "I'm sorry, because I don't like mysticism. It has no trousers and no trousers seat: *n'a pas de quoi*. And I should feel so uncomfortable if I put my hand behind me and felt an absolute blank." And at that point a little brown caterpillar enters and performs on a dead beech-twig—and then comes a chapter on the Holy Family, another on Planes, Plexuses, and so on to that superb digression on Trees:

> Great full-blooded trees, with strange tree-blood in them, soundlessly drumming.
>
> Trees that have no hands and faces, no eyes; yet the powerful sap-scented blood roaring up the great columns. A vast indi-

> vidual life, and an overshadowing will—the will of a tree; something that frightens you. . . .
>
> It's no good looking at a tree to know it. The only thing is to sit among the roots and nestle against its strong trunk, and not bother. That's how I write all about these planes and plexuses—between the toes of a tree, forgetting myself against the great ankle of the trunk. And then, as a rule, as a squirrel is stroked into its wickedness by the faceless magic of a tree, so am I usually stroked into forgetfulness, and into scribbling this book. My tree-book, really.

A Shandean book, for there is humour in it, or should we say, an example of the modern stream-of-consciousness method; at any rate as Mr. Eliot says, "a book to keep at hand and re-read as a criticism of the modern world." But notice how impossible it is for Lawrence, even when he sets out to be abstract, to escape from his genius, and do a little ordinary thinking. Almost at once he is stroked by the faceless magic of a tree into forgetfulness; and in that state, and under the influence of that magic, poetry is born. And he does not bother if it suddenly thrusts itself into a page of philosophizing, or interrupts the course of a narrative; he does not trouble to remove it to a volume of poems.

Yet it might well be expected that in some form of verse he would find a medium most fitted for his poetic purpose. He began to write traditionally in rhymed verse like most of the young Georgians; some of his earliest work, indeed, appeared in their anthologies. But his letters to Edward Marsh, the editor, show him rapidly growing aloof from the others, and by 1916 stating quite clearly a very different ideal for modern poetry. "The essence of poetry with us in this age of stark and unlovely actualities is a stark directness, without a shadow of a lie, or a shadow of deflection anywhere. Everything can go, but this stark, bare, rocky directness of statement, this

alone makes poetry, to-day." And yet his own verse continued for a long time to be a very luxuriant growth, abandoned and prolix like the very vines and fig-trees he describes:

> Look at the many-cicatrised frail vine, none more scarred and frail,
> Yet see him fling himself abroad in fresh abandon
> From the small wound-stump.
>
> Even the wilful, obstinate, gummy fig-tree
> Can be kept down, but he'll burst like a polyp into prolixity.

But though his poetry could scarcely ever be called "bare" or "rocky," it is always direct, spontaneous, always a completely individual and characteristic statement. There is no lying, no deflection in the interests of convention, or prettiness, or current fashions, nothing but a very rare wholeness, a terribly complete honesty, which makes his work unique among all the numerous recent experiments in verse. There is no sentiment, no vagueness, no obscurity; often a forceful rhetoric, or an easy conversational fluency, unlike the meagre cactus-growths which seem to be the more characteristic product of the aridities of our present existence.

Lawrence, with all his seriousness, was inclined to scoff at the high solemnities of art, with its proud immortal glories. He hated all things permanent, static, monumental—all the pathetic devices of mortal humanity to cover over the realities of life and death. He loved the gaiety and carelessness of Etruscan art, the very fact that so little of their impermanent civilization remained. He wanted only an art which should be a tender, fragile growth, flowering out of life for a moment. He would write only *Pansies*, minute "*pensées*," enshrining one living moment, or *Nettles*, little outbursts of poisonous

invective, when anger or contempt rose in him suddenly and the desire to sting his enemies. And loyal at all times to his poetic faith, he did not interfere to hasten or disturb the visitations of divinity. He did not achieve in his work, he did not wish for "the coherence of an arbitrary discipline;" but he did achieve fully that other order, which (as suggested by Mr. Herbert Read in an essay on *Form in Modern Poetry*) is perhaps the only order to be looked for in this generation—"the coherence of a natural process." The shape and form of his work is that of a man's life, not perfected, not fixedly balanced, but organically growing, unfolding, changing, until it was over; ever renewed, even in the *Last Poems*—"only the leavings of a life" when his wrists seemed broken, his heart dead, and strength was gone:

> and still, among it all, snatches of lovely oblivion, and snatches of renewal
> odd, wintry flowers upon the withered stem, yet new, strange flowers
> such as my life has not brought forth before, new blossoms of me—.

GEORGE III AND THE WHIG HISTORIANS

EDGAR McINNIS

I

IT was the peculiar misfortune of George III that practically all his literate contemporaries were Whigs. No doubt it was a misfortune which he could bear with equanimity. Literacy has never been a serious factor in politics, and a little quiet patronage is a more potent argument than all the prose of Burke. But the recipients of patronage died mutely and ingloriously, leaving little memory to posterity. It was the vocal and indignant opponents of the court who held the king's historical reputation at their mercy, and who wrote into the annals of subsequent generations their unsparing condemnation of all his works.

This was true, of course, not merely of the reign of George III, but of the eighteenth century as a whole. In more than one sense this was truly the century of the Whigs. With the death of Swift, the last great Tory pamphleteer disappeared from the scene. The efforts of Bolingbroke to carry on the struggle could make only temporary headway against the settled complacency of his opponents. The Toryism of Dr. Johnson, under the gloss of successive commentators, became merely the quaint trait of a lovable character for whom one makes allowances. With Walpole and Hervey at hand, Bolingbroke went unread; even Junius is less extinct to-day. For the Whigs were not merely the chief actors on the political scene—they were also the interpreters of their own acts for the benefit of posterity. It was an advantage such as few oligarchies have ever enjoyed so completely or used with such effectiveness.

This effectiveness is all the more striking in the light of Whig conduct and policy in the days of their prosperity. "You have done good by stealth," wrote Junius to the Duke of Bedford. "The rest is upon record." The words might almost stand as the epitaph of the whole Whig oligarchy during the first half of the eighteenth century. It is true that the period of Walpole was of profound importance for the future of England; but it was not by conferring benefits upon the nation that Walpole maintained himself in power for twenty years. His greatest wisdom in foreign affairs only made more furious the attacks upon his policy. His most far-sighted trade proposals nearly ended in civil war. But by a judicious use of public funds for the satisfaction of private avarice he held his followers in line, and was able to pursue, almost surreptitiously, a policy which eventually raised England to the undisputed mastery of the world's commerce.

Nevertheless, it was his disservice to public life, rather than his fostering of national prosperity, that remained the chief element in Walpole's reputation. This was partly because its results were so apparent in the twenty years after his fall. For this was the age of Newcastle, the age of corruption and incompetence, when Henry Fox amassed a fortune in public office and Admiral Byng was shot on his own quarterdeck. It took Pitt to give coherence and meaning to England's policy, and Pitt was hardly a Whig even in name. For the glory which he brought her, England paid heavily in the treasure which Walpole had helped her to accumulate; but even the extravagant splendour of Pitt was cheaper than the barren and humiliating prodigality of Newcastle.

All this has been freely admitted by the Whig apologists. In the absence of anyone to say a good word for the Tories, a cheerful confession of past errors could do little

harm to the Whigs. Indeed, a judicious amount of public penance strengthened their moral position when it came to a controversy over the system of George III. At bottom there was a conviction that, with all their faults, the Whigs were less abandoned than the Tories, and that the prosaic realism of Walpole was eminently preferable to the high-flown hypocrisy of Bolingbroke. Macaulay, with his robust dogmatism, summed it up in a sentence: "We are for the principles of good government against Walpole, and for Walpole against the opposition." It was in very much this spirit that the Whig commentators approached the reign of George III.

The accession of the young monarch brought a drastic change in the balance of political power. Hitherto a small group of magnates had been in undisputed possession of the field. There were chronic rivalries largely based upon personal jealousy or pique. There were occasional struggles against intruders such as Pitt. But in general these were no more than the bickerings of a large and somewhat discordant family. The spoils of office continued in the hands of a fairly well-defined group; and if these spoils were never large enough completely to satisfy the insatiable appetites of the political clique, a judicious rotation of sinecures kept the bulk of them tolerably contented.

When, therefore, the king emerged as the rival of the magnates for the control of the vast field of patronage, it amounted to a political revolution. Two courses were open to the leaders of the Whig oligarchy. They could accept the new dispensation in the hope that, by hastening to place the service of their cohorts at the disposal of the monarch, their tangible rewards would wax still greater in the sunshine of the royal gratitude. Or they could do battle for their position against the pretensions of the

Crown, resting on the traditions of half a century and the loyalty of the followers who had hitherto depended on their bounty.

Most of them chose the former course. It showed wisdom in their generation; for though a few leaders such as Newcastle and Fox might be cruelly disappointed in their expectations, the bulk of those who became the King's Friends had little reason to regret their trust in princes. Their surrender left the opponents of the king in a desperate position. Patriots out of place, they became also patrons shorn of power. As their chances of a return to office dwindled, so did their political following. The complacent and munificent Whig era was at an end, and some new and striking development was necessary if the Whigs as such were to survive.

That development took the form of an appeal to popular favour. Deprived of patronage, the opponents of the king fell back on principles. And of all principles, none was more truly Whig than that of opposition to the royal power. It was a little curious to see George III cast for the rôle of another James II. It was even more curious to see the Whigs emerge as champions of popular liberties after eighty years of oligarchy. But they themselves saw no anomaly in the situation. The dangers of 1688 had revived under a more subtle disguise; and the Whigs, whose ancestors had stood between England and the threat of despotism, were ready once more to take up the cause of national freedom against the revived menace from the Crown.

It is doubtful if the nation was very profoundly impressed. The Whigs might confuse the rioting of distressed artisans with popular enthusiasm for their own principles; but not until disgrace followed upon disaster did sentiment swing wholeheartedly against the men

who had squandered the heritage of Pitt. Such illusions, however, were of transient importance. There was more permanence in the fact that two men seized upon the new interpretation and wrote it into the verdict of posterity—a verdict which their intellectual descendants elaborated and confirmed. These two men were Horace Walpole and Edmund Burke.

II

Few writers in a given field have been so universally damned as Horace Walpole; and few have been so uniformly influential. Historians who recognized his *Letters* and *Memoirs* as among the richest sources for the reign of George III were hampered by an insistent suspicion that they were also among the least reliable. So the historians evolved a compromise. They condemned his facts in general as untrustworthy, and then, their consciences relieved, proceeded to use his particular statements of fact where they would do the most good. It is conceivable that a greater caution in both condemnation and acceptance might be a sounder historical method.

There are, of course, good reasons for scepticism when dealing with Walpole. His pretence of full and accurate knowledge must seem a trifle exaggerated in view of his somewhat limited opportunities. It is true that he had many sources of information, but few of them were entirely above suspicion; and for all his position he had little direct contact with inner ministerial circles. Though he remained in parliament until 1768, his interest was on the wane and his attendance irregular. With none of the ministers of George III, except his cousin Conway, was he on intimate terms; and though his knowledge of their characters was sufficient to be an invaluable aid in judging their policies, his actual information was inevitably at

second or third hand. It would hardly be surprising to find it somewhat incomplete.

Yet it is unjust to attack Walpole as an irresponsible retailer of mere political gossip. He was too shrewd for that. Whatever indifference he might assume, his ardent desire was to be a reliable source of inside information about the latest political and social events. To maintain such a reputation with correspondents who had other sources of information besides himself, and who already possessed a sound basis on which to judge that information, precluded the reporting of every casual rumour as a fact worthy of credence. It is clear from the *Letters* that Walpole's assiduity in collecting gossip was coupled with a careful scrutiny of its reliability. How far his efforts at accuracy were unsuccessful can only be judged with finality by checking his detailed statements against a mass of contemporary material, some of it not readily accessible. But one may hazard an opinion that the faults thus revealed would be faults of omission through ignorance, or of exaggeration springing from his irresistible love of presenting every item in a lively and colourful fashion, far more often than of serious misstatement of definite facts.

When it comes to interpretation and opinion, however, the case against Walpole is more serious. It is here that he is most entertaining and least reliable. Nor are the unfair and unforgettable character sketches in the *Memoirs*, which so aroused the ire of later partisans, the gravest rock of offence. One can forgive him for making, in Macaulay's summary, "Pitt a strutting, ranting, mouthing actor, Charles Townshend an impudent and voluble jack-pudding, Murray a demure, cold-blooded, cowardly hypocrite, Hardwicke an insolent upstart, with the understanding of a pettifogger and the heart of a

hangman, Temple an impertinent poltroon, Egmont a solemn coxcomb, Lyttleton a poor creature whose only wish was to go to heaven in a coronet." The summary is as unfair to Walpole as Walpole is unfair to his contemporaries. Besides, there is a sufficient germ of truth in Walpole's descriptions to make them a salutary corrective to the chronic adulation of official biography. His faults in this are venial. What is serious is the way in which the whole perspective of the *Memoirs* was warped to fit a changing personal bias, and imposed upon later historians as a true interpretation of events.

Professor Carl Becker has shown the progress of that change.[1] From internal evidence it is apparent that the *Memoirs*, ostensibly written between 1766 and 1772, were revised as late as 1784 and perhaps even in 1788. And from a study of the *Letters* it is clear that the Walpole of 1784 had an outlook on political affairs widely different from that of the Walpole of 1766. The sceptical observer, animated chiefly by personal antipathy to the Pelhams and the enemies of Sir Robert Walpole, ready to welcome Bute as a check upon this faction and to regard with complacent approval the king's personal activity, since "prerogative is grown so tame you may stroke him," had been transformed by the American crisis into one who recognized the Crown as the supreme menace, and who attributed to the king a deliberate purpose from the day of his accession to subvert the liberties of England. It is this later view that is embodied in the *Memoirs of the Reign of George the Third.*

Now the fact that these were second thoughts does not necessarily invalidate their soundness. An earlier opinion may legitimately be revised in the light of later knowledge, or of significant consequences which formerly had

[1]Carl Becker, "Horace Walpole's *Memoirs of the Reign of George the Third*" (*American Historical Review*, vol. XVI, pp. 225*ff*., 496*ff*.).

been hidden or misunderstood. But in Walpole's case it is more than that. A definite political development had taken place between the first and final drafts of the *Memoirs*, and its effect is seen on almost every page of the completed work.

That development was the rise of the new Whigs. In 1760 it could hardly be said that such a thing as a Whig party existed; there were merely rival Whig factions whose varying combinations lent a mildly kaleidoscopic quality to an otherwise drab political scene. To most of these groups, at the outset of the reign, the personal activity of George III was only another element in this familiar scheme of things. But to one group—the Rockingham Whigs—the revived monarchy was something more. It was a supreme threat to the whole position of the Whig magnates by a rival whose victory would entail complete submission to his control. It was easy to confuse this danger to the Whig aristocracy with a threat to the principles of 1688. And so, while the other Whig groups were being merged one by one in the ranks of the King's Friends, the remnant of the Rockinghams drew together in opposition; and as the disasters deepened in America and discontent increased at home, they came to regard themselves as the bulwarks of all the liberties which their ancestors had wrung from the Crown and which were again in imminent danger of overthrow. It was as an adherent to this group that Walpole wrote the new Whig convictions backward into the history of the whole reign.

III

Walpole, however, was a somewhat belated convert to the new Whig principles. The fact that such principles even existed was due almost entirely to Edmund

Burke. He had begun to promulgate them ten years before the light dawned upon Walpole's volatile mind. He had worked steadily to secure their expression through a coherent party acting upon common fundamental ideas. And where Walpole used these ideas as a basis for his historical interpretation, Burke took historical events and conscripted them into the service of a political creed.

The political career of Burke was one long grandeur of illusion. His sonorous and colourful phrases, whose vividness of imagery is rooted deep in emotion, reveal an imagination too soaring to occupy itself with mere precision of detail. When he descended to this pedestrian level in his speeches, members fled from the House of Commons to more congenial surroundings. It was in dealing with broad general conceptions that he rose to his true heights. But though he might develop his ideas like a philosopher, he conceived them as a mystic; and when he sought to impart them to his fellows, it was as the ministrant at ancient shrines calling a wayward people to return. The only trouble was that the shrines were largely non-existent; and the aspiring worshipper who managed to pierce the glowing veil of Burke's eloquence was only too apt to find an empty room.

Burke himself, however, never wavered in his faith. With splendid misunderstanding he dealt in picturesque aphorisms with the issues of his day, expressing his sincerity of conviction with a mastery of language whose sonority is still mistaken for wisdom. The virtues of the rebellious Americans, the wickedness of the rebellious Parisians, the sinister designs of the Crown and the pure patriotism of its opponents—these were dogmas which were fundamental in his creed. They were mostly based on false premises, but they had the consistency of being

derived from one single and paramount conviction—the perfection of the Whig constitution of 1688.

The reverence of Burke for the results of the Glorious Revolution would have been gratifying to its authors, but their intelligent scepticism might have found it a little excessive. It savours more of the hagiology which has grown up around the American constitution than of the typical English attitude toward any existing system of government. But Burke found in it a focus for all that emotional idealism for which politics became so strange an outlet. His imagination raised it to a pinnacle of perfection, the sublime culmination of a long accumulation of wisdom, "the well-ripened fruit of long delay" not lightly to be touched by impetuous modern hands. The mystic radiance which it diffused illuminated with a transfiguring glow the issues of the day. In this light the intrigues of Samuel Adams were transmuted into the efforts of a trans-Atlantic Hampden struggling for liberty against despotism; the efforts of the states-general to find an alternative for the bankrupt anarchy of the Old Régime became the assaults of vandals upon institutions hallowed by age; and the inept fumblings of George III appeared as the sinister assaults of autocracy upon the liberties which their ancestors, after mighty struggles, had won for the people of England. It was the Romantic spirit appearing in English politics in the appropriate guise of an Irishman.

With this as his basis, Burke by his speeches and pamphlets provided his party with a prophet and their successors with a body of scripture upon which to elaborate. More than any other man, excepting only Charles James Fox, he was the creator of the new Whigs against whom he was later to appeal so fervently. His view of the system and intentions of George III runs through all

his earlier works; but Whig posterity has found a summary of established doctrine in a single pamphlet, *The Causes of the Present Discontents*.

The pamphlet appeared just at the time when George III was at the height of his success. The amiable North had embarked on that disastrous ministry which was to endure with unparalleled complacency the ignominy of the next twelve years. The efforts of the Rockinghams to unite the dying Whig factions in opposition had ended in failure. Lord Chatham oscillated between haughty aloofness and incipient insanity, with spasmodic and ineffectual thunderings against both the factions and the Crown. It was in these circumstances that Burke, in a final effort to draw the Whigs together, set out to analyse the existing situation, to diagnose the ills of the body politic, and to prescribe the necessary remedies.

In none of these aims was he successful. The existing discontent, largely economic at bottom, he attributes to political causes. His analysis of the king's system, though shrewd in its condemnation of the distempers of parliament, is vitiated by its assumption that the myth of the double cabinet had some basis in reality. His proposal that reform should shun organic change and rely on "the interposition of the body of the people" was merely fantastic in an age when many members of parliament had no constituents at all. As for his sovereign remedy—the adoption of the party system—only the most persistent optimist would now regard it as a hopeful instrument of political reform.

None of this, however, has diminished the influence of the pamphlet on the writings of later historians. The fact that the flaws in Burke's reasoning have been fully recognized merely accentuates the curious way in which his views have triumphed. It is admitted that Burke's

other writings reveal an extravagance of expression and a partiality in judgment which are almost chronic; that his speeches and pamphlets are party documents, concerned rather to advance a cause than to present a balanced judgment; that in *The Causes of the Present Discontents* his diagnosis is inaccurate and his remedies inadequate. Yet none of these admissions seems to prevent the acceptance of the pamphlet as a sober historical analysis which can be treated, not as the special pleading of a partisan, but as the considered verdict of a philosopher. And so the historians of the nineteenth century, taking their guidance from Walpole and Burke, proceeded to stereotype the Whig interpretation of the period which still lingers with us to-day.

IV

It was not only in dealing with the eighteenth century that the Whig dogs had the best of it. Their literary monopoly continued through the nineteenth century, and the approach of Stubbs to mediaeval England, of Froude to the Reformation, even of Gardiner to the Puritan revolution, was to a considerable extent determined by an outlook which was basically Whig. A mere enumeration of these names commands respect for the assiduity of scholarship and the brilliance of presentation which earned for them a merited place in the front rank of historians. But most influential of all—most endowed with these same qualities, and most determinedly Whig at all points—was that protagonist of nineteenth-century Whiggism, Thomas Babington Macaulay.

"A high regard for the memory of William III," wrote Hallam in his *Constitutional History*, "may justly be reckoned one of the tests by which genuine Whiggism, as opposed to both Tory and Republican principles, has al-

ways been recognized." It is a test which Macaulay passes with flying colours. The magnificent passage in the tenth chapter of his *History of England*, written against the disturbed background of 1848, in which he sums up the lasting benefits of the Glorious Revolution, puts his orthodoxy beyond reproach. It is Whiggism in the tradition of Burke; and though Macaulay parts company from Burke in his willingness to admit the need for change and adaptation, their views of the past are remarkably akin in most of the essential points.

It is to be regretted that Macaulay, who in 1844 contemplated a review of Burke's life and writings, decided "that I have taken a subject altogether unmanageable." A study of Burke in relation to his times would have embodied in definite form those views of Macaulay which we are forced to divine from incidental references. But in his second essay on Chatham, which he wrote instead, he deals with the early part of the reign of George III at sufficient length to reveal quite clearly his approach to the period under consideration.

For Macaulay was the embodiment of the Whiggism of 1832. It differed from the Whiggism of Burke in its adaptation to the conditions of a changing industrial age, but it sprang from the same fundamental roots. For Burke the constitution stood "on a nice equipoise, with steep precipices and deep waters upon all sides of it." The problem, in his view, was to check the power of the Crown without dangerous concessions to the power of the mob. But in 1832 the power of the Crown had ceased to be a danger. The distempers of parliament had now become a problem for which Burke's cautious solutions were no longer adequate. With no more desire than Burke to plunge into the deep waters of democracy, and in full agreement with his statement that the natural

strength of the kingdom lay in "the great peers, the leading landed gentlemen, the opulent merchants and manufacturers, the substantial yeomanry," the Whigs felt that altered circumstances had deprived these very elements of the influence to which they were entitled, and had made necessary a readjustment, not of the fundamental principles of the constitution, but of the basis upon which members were chosen for the House of Commons. It was a redefinition of that standard Whig phrase, "the nation," in terms with which Burke would readily have agreed—the entrusting of legislative duties to the substantial section of the community, the vesting of the franchise in those elements so associated as to be almost identical, "property and intelligence."

It was in the light of this development that Macaulay viewed the politics of the preceding century. "The conflict which commenced in the middle of the eighteenth century, which still remains undecided, and in which our children and grandchildren will probably be called on to act or to suffer, is between a large portion of the people on the one side, and the Crown and the Parliament united on the other." These words appear in his essay on Hallam's *Constitutional History*, written in 1828. His second essay on Chatham was written in 1844, when the middle class—"that brave, honest and sound-hearted class, which is as anxious for the maintenance of order and the security of property, as it is hostile to corruption and oppression"—had won its political victory, and the Whigs were complacently beginning to accept the new and more comprehensive title of Liberals. The intervening events had merely served to justify Macaulay's earlier view; and in the essay he carries that view into his description of the early years of the reign of George III.

The debt of this essay to the classic Whig sources is

none the less striking for being only partially acknowledged. The influence of Burke, indeed, is implicit in the air of homage revealed by both references and quotations. The influence of Walpole is suggested by the heading, which couples his letters to Horace Mann with the Chatham correspondence. But still more influential were the *Memoirs*, which Macaulay consulted in manuscript; and paraphrase after paraphrase bears witness to the full use which he made of them. So, too, does the treatment of his subject. The characters of the leading Whigs, from Bedford to Conway; the "reptile species of politicians, never before and never since known in our country," who formed the ranks of the King's Friends; the Rockingham group which "was, in our view, exactly what a party should be"—these are drawn without essential alteration from the pure fountains of Whig history. And the synthesis is completed by a vivid picture of conflict between an outraged nation and a corrupted oligarchy subservient to a corrupting monarchy—the touch of the nineteenth-century liberal who saw in the riots against Bute an earlier version of the tumults of 1832.

Yet, recognizing this, one must admit the lustre which Macaulay sheds on the Whig interpretation. His very faults are those of an alert and vigorous mind, and the degree in which they detract from his virtues as an historian is more than balanced by the power and vivacity which they lend to his literary style. His judgments are too dogmatic to be accurate. His character portraits are uncompromising studies in black and white. His account of the popular opposition to the king's system tends to exaggerate both its significance and its unanimity. But he does avoid an over-emphasis on the subversive designs of the king or the moral turpitude of his chief ministers. He is less concerned with these features than with a broad

picture of a decade of political conflict; and though the colours may be heightened and the perspective occasionally awry, the whole is drawn with a clarity and vividness which lifts it from the realm of historical realism into the sublimer heights of the Romantic school of literature. Macaulay, like Carlyle, would still survive though all his historical judgments should be rejected. But in the meantime he helped to stereotype a point of view which was becoming increasingly difficult to controvert, and which later writers continued to repeat and to amplify.

V

New influences helped to mould the views of a new generation. What the Reform Bill had been to Macaulay, the career of Gladstone was to Lecky and the elder Trevelyan. That ardent and persuasive old man, who began by submerging the complacent liberalism of the Whigs in a more strenuous creed which combined the conservatism of Peel with the radicalism of Cobden, ended by destroying Whiggism entirely. And though, when the breach came, both Trevelyan and Lecky chose to stand by the old faith and follow Hartington into the brief wilderness which separated them from the tents of Toryism, they could not be unaffected by the events of the previous twenty years. It was a time when the mild middle-class democracy, which Macaulay found so satisfying, ceased to be adequate. A new reform bill brought the working class into the electorate. The new electorate thrust the state into new activities. The idea of the popular will took on a wider significance in the light of Midlothian, and found its reflection in the views of these later historians upon the politics of the preceding century.

At the same time, the Whig legend had gained in clarity what it was losing in accuracy. It was natural

that Trevelyan should follow the views of the uncle for whom he cherished so affectionate an admiration. But he went farther in making explicit the personal condemnation of George III which Macaulay had left largely to implication; and the charm and urbanity of his style served to make the verdict all the more drastic. His choice of subject, indeed, made this almost inevitable. A Whig history of the American Revolution, centring as it must about the salient point of conflict between the Crown and the Opposition, could hardly fail to make the king the villain of the piece. An ardently sympathetic study of Charles James Fox could give little quarter to the stubborn royal figure who was Fox's most determined adversary. It is little wonder that in Trevelyan's pages the background of the Newcastle era is largely neglected and the circumstances of 1760 largely ignored, and that the king emerges as the source of all the evils against which the Whigs, as guardians of the popular liberties, struggled so long and so vainly, and which ended in the ruin of the Empire.

This interpretative process reaches its climax in the brilliant pages of Lecky. The arrangement of his *History of England in the Eighteenth Century* is itself an indication of the change which had taken place since the previous generation. Hallam's *Constitutional History* had closed with the accession of George III. Macaulay had planned to bring his *History of England* only to the same point. Both had felt that the age of George III was too close to be treated with finality. Fifty years has naturally changed all that. It is the period before 1760 that Lecky chooses to neglect. The Whig era holds little attraction; to his more modern Whiggism its events are uninteresting and its politics unimportant. For him, as for Trevelyan, the real attraction lies in the struggle between the Crown

and the Whigs—a drama in which heroism and villainy can be more neatly classified than in that period which is the bane of Whig moralists, the confusingly human age of Walpole.

All good drama needs a villain, and Lecky's account is eminently dramatic. His sources are unimpeachable Whig. The references which he cites on the domestic events of the period have a fine disregard for manuscript sources. Biographies, published correspondence, memoirs—Chatham, Grenville, Waldegrave, Bedford, Walpole—these supply his information. It is a vast amount of information, but it stands in need of correctives. The result is that Lecky not only accepts but heightens the Whig interpretation; and above all, he finds his gospel in *The Causes of the Present Discontents*.

Under these conditions the reputation of George III could expect no quarter. It is now clear to the historian that the king not only accepted, but animated and controlled the policies which brought England to the verge of ruin. The increasing severity of the Whig indictment finds its most vigorous and complete expression in Lecky's summary:

> Ignorant, narrow-minded, and arbitrary, with an unbounded confidence in his own judgment and an extravagant estimate of his own prerogative, resolved at all hazards to compel his ministers to adopt his own views, or to undermine them if they refused, he spent a long life in obstinately resisting measures which are now almost universally admitted to have been good, and in supporting measures which are as universally admitted to have been bad.

This is the text which Lecky elaborates with chapter and verse of successive royal iniquities. If the Whigs of 1770, in whatever heaven was reserved for them, could have knowledge of the stamp of finality thus placed upon

their views, they must surely have rejoiced at the completeness of their own vindication.

It is interesting to speculate on the interpretation which a literate Tory, if such an anomaly could have existed, would have placed upon the events of the same period. One can conceive a legend of a patriot king struggling against the corruption of faction, thwarted by the rottenness of public life for which his opponents were responsible, and failing in the end because the flawed and untempered instruments which he was forced to use were inadequate for his high purpose. It is too late now for a modern Tory to advance such an interpretation. Twenty-five years of consistent royal ineptitude is a great deal to have to explain away, and all such efforts as those of Sir John Fortescue in his edition of the *Correspondence* to rehabilitate the king's reputation fail before the hard record of successive disasters. Wilkes, Middlesex, America; the embroilment in foreign wars which the government was incompetent to wage or to avert; the national debt doubled in order to lose an empire—these are the salient elements in the indictment. Small wonder that the Whig view has steadily grown in strength and assurance.

Yet, faced with this view, the twentieth century remains sceptical and unconvinced. It is possible that some elements of the hypothetical Tory apologia might redress the balance nearer to the actual truth. It is a fact that the disasters of the reign were due as much to the incompetence of ministers as to the interference of the king. It is a fact that the system which the Whigs had created, and the political degeneracy for which they were responsible, made for impotence in the face of the crises which they themselves helped to provoke. And while George III had neither the ability nor the judgment to

overcome these obstacles single-handed, the aid of capable and vigorous ministers might have enabled him to avoid the worst errors and to remedy the worst defects.

Unfortunately there were no such ministers available. Bute, Grenville, North, in turn proved their inadequacy; the weakness of the Rockinghams helped to nullify the excellence of their aims; the failure of the elder Pitt to rise to the demands of the situation was the crowning disaster. The king himself deserves no little censure, and even a measure of contempt. But it is possible that the traditional obloquy heaped upon his memory is something more than his due; and the work of such scholars as Namier, courageously tackling the appalling mass of original and unexplored manuscripts of the period, may yet make possible a clearer perspective. It is hardly probable that even this will transform George III from villain into hero; but it is more than likely that it will end by putting the Whigs in a somewhat humbler place than they have assigned to themselves in their own histories during the past century and a half.

EMERSON AND EVOLUTION

JOSEPH WARREN BEACH

POETS, in forming their general views, are not always most influenced by the first-rate thinkers. What they rely on for their own effects is the imagination, and they are likely to receive the greatest stimulus from writers who appeal to that faculty in them. A poet like Shelley read everything, and somewhere behind his poetry lies the discipline of Locke and Berkeley, of Plato and Spinoza. But when we undertake to trace in it the obvious influence of individuals, what we can put our fingers on are concepts derived from D'Holbach and Volney and Godwin. This for his early poems, before Platonism took strong hold upon him. And when his materialism gave way to a large extent before the charms of Platonism, it was quite as much Plotinus as the great original from whom he derived his notion of that mystical system. Thomas Taylor in his translations and interpretations of the Neo-Platonists was, in Shelley's day, the popular exponent of the doctrine of Eternal Ideas; just as D'Holbach and Godwin were the popular exponents of eighteenth-century empirical philosophy.

It is perfectly natural that the poet, however serious he may be, should find matter better shaped to his need in popular writers than in the severe logic of the great thinkers. His need is for ideas easily assimilated to the substance of his thought, as one concerned with human destiny and aspiration. And the matter of philosophy is often found, in popular writers, in simpler and more picturesque form, or built up into systematic structures that impress the lay mind more than the sober and

modest offerings of the masters. Thus Wordsworth seems to have been more literally influenced by the psychological system of David Hartley—a second-rate man—than by the great English philosophers in whom his system was grounded. Coleridge was more dazzled by the ambitious structures of Plotinus and Schelling than by the severe rationalism of Aristotle and Kant. And in his speculations on the evolution of life, the writer on whom he drew most extensively was a disciple of Schelling, Henrik Steffens. Steffens was a scientist so unimportant that you will not find his name in standard histories of the evolution theory, or of geology, which was his special branch. But thanks to Schelling and the "deductive" method, he was able to give Coleridge a more comprehensive view of scientific principles than any sober scientist could do.

Emerson, again, while he had a speaking acquaintance with all the great names in philosophy, derived his chief inspiration from second-rate thinkers, from Swedenborg and Boehme, from Plotinus and the "Zoroastrian Oracles," and—from Coleridge. Emerson was a man of great intellectual candour, and he frankly acknowledged that certain authors were read by him not so much to get to the bottom of a subject as for the "lustres" which they shed upon it for his imagination. The books which probably influenced him most profoundly in the years when he was preparing to write his little treatise on *Nature* were Coleridge's *Friend* and *Aids to Reflection*. The first of these, in particular, is largely responsible for Emerson's general philosophy of science, with its rather precarious grounding in "idealism." And while Emerson invariably wrote like an angel, we must conclude that his nature-philosophy was a loose and popular rendering of Coleridge, who was a loose and popular rendering of

Schelling, who—for all his magnificent show of dialectic—was no better than a Kant run wild.

One of the most curious chapters in the development of a poet's mind is the process by which Emerson arrived at his transcendental version of the theory of evolution. And here again, his opinions were not formed primarily by the great scientific evolutionists, Buffon, Lamarck, Saint-Hilaire, and Darwin, but by a succession of second-rate, popular, and more or less dubious authorities. And the first of these was Coleridge.

Much has been made, by literary critics, of passages in certain English poets—Coleridge, Tennyson, Browning, Emerson—which, long before the publication of *The Origin of Species*, suggest the doctrine of evolution. But a close examination will often show that these poets did not have in mind the theory of the "transmutation of species" (to use Lyell's term for it). What they had in mind was often merely the concept of a "graduated scale of being" in the organic world. This was a concept widely held by scientists and philosophers in the eighteenth century and earlier, many of whom had not a tincture of the modern evolutionary views. It was held by Leibnitz, Locke, and Kant, by Sir Matthew Hale, and other theological writers, by Lessing, Herder, Bonnet, Robinet, Buffon, Goethe, Lamarck—not to speak of the poets Pope, Akenside, and Thomson—associated, or not associated, with the "transmutation of species." It was held by Schelling and Steffens, and was taken over from them by Coleridge in his *Hints towards the Formation of a more Comprehensive Theory of Life*, where he gives a highly elaborated account of the scale of being extending up through various stages of organized life to man. It is doubtful whether Emerson was acquainted with this work, which was not published till 1848. But he had

certainly read several briefer essays of Coleridge's on the same theme: the Dialogue between Demosius and Mystes in *The Constitution of the Church and State* (1830), the "Monologue" on Life, published in *Fraser's Magazine* in November, 1835, a brief paragraph in *Specimens of Table Talk* (1835), and, above all, the following paragraph from *Aids to Reflection*, a book which Emerson read with close attention as early as 1829:

> Every rank of creatures, as it ascends in the scale of creation leaves death behind it or under it. The metal at its height of being seems a mute prophecy of the coming vegetation, into a mimic semblance of which it crystallizes. The blossom and flower, the acme of vegetable life, divides into correspondent organs with reciprocal functions, and by instinctive motions and approximations seems impatient of that fixture, by which it is differenced in kind from the flower-shaped Psyche, that flutters with free wing above it. And wonderfully in the insect realm doth irritability, the proper seat of instinct . . . typically rehearse the adaptive understanding, yes, and the moral affections and charities, of man. . . . Thus all lower natures find their highest good in semblances and seekings of that which is higher and better. All things strive to ascend, and ascend in their striving. And shall man alone stoop?

To the modern reader this sounds much like the evolutionary doctrine of Lamarck. But Coleridge means nothing of the sort. He is not talking of the origin of species. He more than once repudiated the notion that man is derived from any lower animal form, or that any animal species is derived from another. He is simply enunciating the traditional doctrine of the scale of being, which he might have found in such a perfectly orthodox work as Matthew Hale's *Primitive Origination of Mankind*.

In considering this notion, we must always bear in mind that it may be held in several distinct ways. (1) It

may be held in connection with the theory of the "transmutation of species," with the understanding that the "higher" forms have been derived from the lower by natural means such as those set forth by Lamarck and Darwin. (2) It may not imply evolution at all in this sense, but still be thought of as a series of events in chronological sequence; life being regarded historically as later in appearance than inorganic matter, and the higher forms of life as following the lower in a graduated scale of ascent. (3) It may not even imply chronological sequence, or take into account at all the question of successive appearance in time. The several orders of living beings are then ranged from lowest to highest as a matter of classification, by way of showing the *unity of plan* which runs through the whole of nature.

Lyell, in his *Principles of Geology* (1830-3) repudiates with almost equal firmness the first and second views listed above. He believes neither in the "evolution of one species out of another," nor in the chronological succession of higher and higher forms of being. The most that he admits is "the unity of plan that runs through" the system of vertebrated animals. Browning, in *Paracelsus* (1835), admits the second and third views, including the unity of plan running from inorganic matter up to man's spiritual life and the historical sequence in this graduated ascent. This is apparently the position of Tennyson, too, in the cancelled stanzas of *The Palace of Art* (1833). There is nothing to show that these poets did not agree with Lyell in ascribing each new species to a special act of creation, rather than assume a "transmutation of species."

In Schelling and Steffens and Coleridge the evolution of the successive stages of being is worked out in an elaborate systematic way. But they are writing not as

scientists but as metaphysicians, proceeding *a priori* from the assumptions of a mystical idealism. It is very hard to understand, what apparently we must understand, that they are not concerned with the *genesis* of living things, that they did not have in view the actual historical process of evolution. Schelling's "evolution," like Coleridge's, is a mere logical, or conceptual, unfolding, or disinvolvement, of the lower category of being from the higher, or *vice versa*—for like Leibnitz, they read their scale of beings downward just as readily as upward. Existence is for them "ideal" (or intellectual) in its essence, and the evolution of a form is no more than the timeless self-explication of an idea. If the reader finds this statement obscure, let him go to Schelling himself—the great original, in modern times, of this brand of Transcendentalism.

In forming his views on nature, Emerson started where Coleridge left off. He was subject to various influences under which Coleridge did not fall. Views and expressions which in Coleridge did not carry the modern evolutionary implication came in the end to carry this implication for Emerson. He must have read in *Table Talk* Coleridge's somewhat sentimental repudiation of the theory of man's descent from a lower animal form:

> Look at that head of Cline, by Chantrey! Is that forehead, that nose, those temples, and that chin, akin to the monkey tribe? No, no. To a man of sensibility no argument could disprove the bestial theory so convincingly as a quiet contemplation of that fine bust.

In the long run, however, Coleridge's condemnation of the "bestial theory" would make less impression than his account of how "the animal rises" in the "scale of being." And so was planted the seed of what in the

end was to flower as the evolutionary faith. But it was a long time in flowering.

In 1830 Emerson read Lee's *Life of Cuvier* and was impressed with the great anatomist's fourfold classification of the animal kingdom. But he noted rather ruefully, I think, that Cuvier took no stock in the Coleridgean "scale of beings," though he did recognize an intimate inter-connection among organized forms.

It is clear that Cuvier gave no encouragement to the view that one species may be derived from another by "transmutation." Nor did any other of the scientific writers read by Emerson during the years 1830-4. One of the most important of these was Dr. John Abernethy. Emerson's attention had been drawn to the "grand conception" of John Hunter by Coleridge's discussion in *The Friend*; and he seems to have studied with care the lectures in which Abernethy expounded Hunter's "theory of life." In these lectures Emerson would find more than one reference to the "great chain of living beings, which seems to connect even man with the common matter of the universe." But this he would find in combination with an express statement that "each link in the chain is perfectly independent of the other."

> In investigating this part of the works of Nature, the multiplication of the species, we perceive, as in other instances, the same uniformity of design, and diversity of means; the same gradation, and seeming concatenation in their series. Yet this concatenation, though delightful and interesting to our observation, is perplexing to our understanding; for each link of the chain is perfectly independent of the other, nor does any necessity for such series and order, or seeming connection appear. Still, however, it produces on the mind effects similar to those which are derived from viewing a highly finished picture, wherein the shades and variety of light and colour are so softened down and blended together, that it is difficult to say where the one ends and the other begins.

Abernethy was obviously troubled by his own inability to find more than aesthetic significance in the "concatenation" of animal forms. But it never occurred to him to interpret it *genetically* by reference to the origin of species.

Much the same position is occupied more than ten years later by Sir Charles Bell in his treatise on *The Hand, its Mechanism and vital Endowments as evincing Design* (1833). This book was read by Emerson in the year of its publication, and the entries in his *Journal* show that he was much impressed by it. Bell, who had been a professor in the Royal College of Surgeons, was of the Abernethy faction in the dispute between "vitalists" and "mechanists," as we should call them to-day. He deprecates the materialistic and irreligious disposition of mind so often found among distinguished naturalists. In this connection he makes allusion to the theories of Lamarck, without mentioning him by name. He does not take stock in this view, "that new organs have been produced by a desire and consequent effort of the animal to stretch and mould itself." And he cannot believe in the unbroken uniformity of natural laws, at least in the animal world, but must resort to the notion of the special creation of separate species.

Emerson, then, found in Bell no more countenance for the theory of evolution than in Cuvier and Abernethy. But he did find what he had found in Coleridge and laid much to heart, the notion of a "progressive system" in nature, and that of "an anticipating or prospective intelligence," as well as the notion (not found in Coleridge) of the immensities of time in which nature has carried on her operations.

> There is extreme grandeur in the thought of an anticipating or prospective intelligence: in reflecting that what was finally

> accomplished in man, was begun in times incalculably remote, and antecedent to the great revolutions which the earth's surface has undergone. Nor are these conclusions too vast to be drawn from the examination of a part so small as the bones of the hand; since we have shown that the same system of parts which constitutes the perfection of that instrument adapted to our condition, had its type in the members of those vast animals which inhabited the bays, and inland lakes of a former world.

The animals referred to in the last sentence were the prehistoric Saurians — Plesiosaurus, Ichthyosaurus — whose paddles, or anterior extremities, according to Bell, show us the "immediate changes from the foot of animals to the fin of the fish."

This striking example of the similarity of organ in animals of the most diverse kind and period greatly struck the imagination of Emerson. And he reproduced it, together with the pious moral drawn by Bell, in a lecture delivered in Boston in December, 1833, on "The Relation of Man to the Globe." In this lecture he speaks of the fact—

> the most surprising, I may say the most sublime, that man is no upstart in the creation, but has been prophesied in nature for a thousand thousand ages before he appeared; that, from times incalculably remote, there has been a progressive preparation for him, an effort to produce him; the meaner creatures containing the elements of his structure and pointing at it from every side. . . . His limbs are only a more exquisite organization—say rather the finish—of the rudimental forms that have already been sweeping the sea and creeping in the mud; the brother of his hand is even now cleaving the Arctic sea in the fin of the whale, and innumerable ages since was pawing the marsh in the flipper of the saurian.

This has often been cited as evidence that Emerson had accepted the theory of evolution. Such a conclusion is quite unwarranted. The thought is taken bodily from

Bell, who does not dream of the evolutionary hypothesis. It is simply proof of "an anticipating or prospective intelligence" at work in nature.

What inspired Emerson to give his 1833 lectures on natural history was an experience more vivid than any book could be, since it came to him through an ocular view of the facts of nature systematized. This was his visit in July to the Museum in the Paris *Jardin des Plantes*. Here he found before his very eyes the several animal forms graded from lowest to highest in the scale. How much he was impressed is shown by his entry in his *Journal:*

> The universe is a more amazing puzzle than ever, as you glance along this bewildering series of animated forms,—the hazy butterflies, the carved shells, the birds, beasts, fishes, insects, snakes, and the upheaving principle of life, everywhere incipient, in the very rock aping organized forms. Not a form so grotesque, so savage, nor so beautiful but is an expression of some property inherent in man the observer,—an occult relation between the very scorpions and man. I feel the centipede in me,—cayman, carp, eagle and fox. I am moved by strange sympathies; I say continually "I will be a naturalist."

Considering the background of Emerson's reading and thought, there is no reason to find an evolutionary pronouncement here. There is nothing here that is not in Coleridge, in Abernethy, in Bell, except the *poetic* quality of the expression, the "strange sympathies," the "occult relation;" and these are perhaps more mystical than scientific in imaginative reference. We may say of the man who wrote this passage that he was ready for the theory of evolution, but not that he had embraced it.

Even in *Nature*, published three years later, there is nothing specifically evolutionary. What *Nature* expresses, on the side of scientific theory, is Emerson's

sense of the want of any real explanation of the natural process. What he has to teach more positively are the Coleridge doctrines,—the values of creative ideas in scientific thought, the distinction between Reason and Understanding as criteria of truth, the ideality of the outer world, and the correspondence between the outer world and the world of our thought or spirit. These are the main subjects of comment in his *Journal* between 1833 and 1840.

In 1835, in his search for the clue to nature, Emerson came under the influence of a very inferior Coleridge. This was the "French philosopher" to whom he refers in *Nature*. It was a certain Guillaume Gaspar Lenroy Oegger, Professor of Philosophy and Vicar of Notre Dame in Paris, whose work Emerson read in manuscript before it had been translated by a lady of his acquaintance and published in Boston. It was entitled *The True Messiah, or the Old and New Testaments Examined according to the Principles of the Language of Nature*. Emerson found that "Oegger's plan and scope argue great boldness and manhood." His views fell in with Emerson's somewhat crude way of interpreting the metaphysical doctrine of idealism; and this is a sample of the sort of thing he copied into his *Journal* from Oegger's manuscript, some of which he soon embodied in the text of *Nature:*

> The visible creation . . . cannot, must not . . . be anything but the exterior circumference of the invisible and metaphysical world, and material objects are necessarily kinds of *scoriae* of the substantial thoughts of the Creator. . . . For God to create is only to show. The universe in its minutest details existed for God as really before the creation, as after it; because it existed in him substantially, as when the statue exists in the block of marble from which the sculptor extracts it. . . . No fibre in the animal, no blade of grass in the vegetable, no form of crystallization in inanimate matter, is without its clear and

> well-determined correspondence in the moral and metaphysical world. . . .

Thus Emerson finds support for his favourite doctrine of the universe as "the externization of the soul" (or of God, as he has it in the *Journal* version).

In September, 1836, *Nature* was published and off its author's hands. But he went on writing about nature and science. And what he has to say now is much more pertinent, from a scientific point of view, than anything he said before the publication of his book. The reason for this is unmistakable. He has been reading Lyell. There are several entries in September and October of 1836, and a highly significant passage in his lecture on "The Humanity of Science," delivered in December, all bearing testimony to the impression made by Lyell.

The significant feature of the first entry is the naming of Saint-Hilaire. Emerson may have heard of the French scientist in Paris or London in 1833; but it is most likely that he was first impressed with what Lyell said of him:

> M. Geoffroy St. Hilaire has declared his opinion, that there has been an uninterrupted succession in the animal kingdom, effected by means of generation from the earliest ages of the world up to the present day, and that the ancient animals whose remains have been preserved in the strata, however different, may nevertheless have been the ancestors of those now in being. This notion is not very generally received, but we are not warranted in assuming the contrary, without fully explaining the data and reasoning by which it may be refuted.

Here was a stimulating and comprehensive theory which fitted the conditions Emerson had set up for a scientific Idea; and while Lyell did not consider it well-grounded, we can well understand how it would have impressed Emerson and led him to include Saint-Hilaire in his list of fruitful scientific thinkers.

One October entry is significant for the mention of Lamarck and the somewhat loose and sketchy statement of his theory. He appears along with Goethe and Newton as examples of "this invincible tendency of the mind to unify."

> The system of Lamarck is an imperfect result of the same force. It aims to find one monad of organic life which shall be the common element of every animal, and becoming an infusory, a poplar-worm, or a man according to circumstances. It says to the canker-worm, "How dost thou, Brother? Please God you shall yet be a philosopher!"

Lyell gives quite an extended account of Lamarck's theories, but the sentences which probably suggested this fanciful flight of Emerson are the following:

> This nature is daily engaged in the formation of the elementary rudiments of animal and vegetable existence, which correspond to what the ancients termed *spontaneous generation*. She is always beginning anew, day by day, the work of creation, by forming monads, or "rough draughts" (ébauches), which are the only living things she gives birth to directly.
>
> There are distinct primary rudiments of plants and animals, and probably of each of the great divisions of the animal and vegetable kingdoms. These are gradually developed into the higher and more perfect classes by the slow but unceasing agency of two influential principles. . . .

Emerson's entry in his *Journal* was transferred bodily, with slight modifications, to his December lecture on "The Humanity of Science." One scholar somewhat uncritically speaks of the time "when Emerson lectured on evolution in 1836." Judging by the outline of the lecture given by Cabot, this interpretation is unjustified. Emerson's subject was "the humanity of that spirit in which nature works," and Lamarck was offered merely as an example of the "tyrannical instinct" which impels the mind "to reduce all facts to a few laws, to one law."

There is no reason to say that Emerson had adopted the theory of Lamarck. Having in mind Lyell's judgment of it as unsound, Emerson specifically characterizes it as "an imperfect result of the same force." The utmost we can say is that in 1836 Emerson's imagination had been impressed with Lamarck's concept as an interesting scientific theory.

But once this seed was lodged in his mind, it was bound to sprout. Emerson had no such theological grounds as Coleridge for fighting shy of the "bestial theory." The doctrine of the fall of man meant nothing to him—on the contrary. His theology was of the most nebulous and accommodating order. As the years went on, he became more and more case-hardened by Neo-Platonism and every form of Oriental "idealism" against the assaults of any objective fact whatsoever. His mind was one in which contraries lived happily together in a sort of benign solution. That is the note of Transcendentalism. He was exposed to scientific influences which Coleridge did not encounter. Moreover, was it not his own revered Coleridge who had first fired his imagination with the thought of an ascending scale of life, and even talked of how irritability was "evolved out of the growth," and sensibility out of irritability? A mere Emerson could not be expected to distinguish, like Coleridge, between a purely logical evolution and an actual "historical" process.

The transition from the scale-of-being phase of Emerson's thought to the strictly evolutionary phase was made by insensible degrees; and it is perhaps doubtful whether he himself was aware of what was taking place. In 1841, in his oration on "The Method of Nature," and in the poem, *Woodnotes*, his expressions

are a shade more evolutionary than in any earlier utterance. In 1844, in his essay on *Nature*, he is several shades more evolutionary:

> Now we learn what patient periods must round themselves before the rock is formed; then before the rock is broken, and the first lichen race has disintegrated the thinnest external plate into soil, and opened the door for the remote Flora, Fauna, Ceres, and Pomona to come in. How far off yet is the trilobite! how inconceivably remote is man! All duly arrive, and then race after race of men. It is a long way from granite to the oyster; farther yet to Plato and the preaching of the immortality of the soul. Yet all must come, as surely as the first atom has two sides.

In this year appeared that scandal-rousing book, *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*, probably written by Robert Chambers. Of Chambers's work Darwin said, "the writing and arrangement is certainly admirable, but his geology strikes me as bad, and his zoology far worse." The book contains, at any rate, an elaborate statement and defence of the theory of evolution. It is the most plausible and comprehensive view of evolution that Emerson had ever encountered. But so familiar was this way of thought by then that it caused him neither shock nor excitement. The only thing that bothered him was the perfunctory piety with which the author tried to gild the pill for his religious readers:

> *Vestiges of Creation.* What is so ungodly as these polite bows to God in English books? He is always mentioned in the most respectful and deprecatory manner. . . . But courage only will the spirit prompt or accept. Everything in this Vestiges of Creation is good, except the theology, which is civil, timid, and dull.

From now on Emerson's *Journal* entries show a more marked evolutionary cast. Not long after the notice of

the *Vestiges*, we have the most uncompromising declaration Emerson was ever to make that man is a child of earth:

> The master can do his great deed, the desire of the world,—say to find his way between azote and oxygen, detect the scent of the new rock superposition, find the law of the curves,—because he has just come out of Nature, or from being a part of that thing. . . . He knows the laws of azote because just now he was azote. Man is only a piece of the universe made alive.

The next book which deeply affected Emerson's views of nature was by a now forgotten writer, the German-American journalist, Johann Bernhard Stallo. It was apparently in 1849 that Emerson read Stallo's *General Principles of the Philosophy of Nature* (Boston, 1848). Stallo had a vigorous philosophical mind, and gives, I think, an acceptable *résumé* of the systems of Schelling and Hegel, with some account of Kant and Fichte, and of "Oken's system of nature." From his book Emerson probably learned more of German metaphysics than from any other reading; it is from this time on that we have the most frequent references to Schelling and Hegel, as well as to Oken, Saint-Hilaire, and other evolutionary naturalists. The evolutionism that Emerson found in Stallo, however, was rather vague and transcendental. He writes in his *Journal* of "Schelling's *aperçu*" (the word is Stallo's) and its later forms in Oken, Hegel, *etc.*: "The idea was that the form or type became transparent in the actual forms of successive ages as presented in geology." That is the nearest Emerson comes in these years to a statement of the theory of evolution.

In his direct quotations from Stallo there is one very interesting, if obscure, expression: "The development of all individual forms will be spiral." This is evidently

the notion Emerson wished to express in the motto added to *Nature* in 1849:

> A subtle chain of countless rings
> The next unto the farthest brings
> . . . . .
> And, striving to be man, the worm
> Mounts through all the spires of form.

But the main reflections of Emerson after reading Stallo are in line with his favourite notion of the creative Idea and his equally favourite "idealism."

The Origin of Species passed without notice. Either Emerson's attention was not drawn to this epoch-making book; or else, after Chambers and Stallo, it made no particular impression upon him. Beside the high and mystical discourse of German idealists, mere objective science was perhaps too dry for Emerson. In 1873 he notes: "Darwin's Origin of Species was published in 1859, but Stallo, in 1849, writes, 'animals are but foetal forms of man.'" This oracular utterance is of more import to the Concord sage than the ranged and sifted evidences of natural selection.

The writing of Emerson which most strikingly suggests the theory of evolution is found in a lecture, first delivered in 1854, and brought to its final form in two lectures on "Poetry and Imagination" delivered in 1872. By the year 1854 he had been subjected to every important influence that was to mould his scientific outlook, and this is the sum of his philosophy of nature. The following passages are the most significant:

> First innuendos, then broad hints, then smart taps are given, suggesting that nothing stands still in Nature but death; that the creation is on wheels, in transit, always passing into something else, streaming into something higher; that matter is not what it appears;—that chemistry can blow it all into gas . . . .

The ends of all are moral, and therefore the beginnings are such. Thin or solid, everything is in flight. I believe this conviction makes the charm of chemistry,—that we have the same avoirdupois matter in an alembic, without a vestige of the old form; and in animal transformations not less, as in grub and fly, in egg and bird, in embryo and man; everything undressing and stealing away from its old into new form, and nothing fast but those invisible cords which we call laws, on which all is strung.

. . . . . .

[Thought] has its own polarity. One of these vortices or self-directions of thought is the impulse to search resemblance, affinity, identity, in all its objects, and hence our science, from its rudest to its most refined theories.

The electric word pronounced by John Hunter a hundred years ago, *arrested and progressive development*, indicating the way upward from the invisible protoplasm to the highest organisms, gave the poetic key to Natural Science, of which the theories of Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, of Oken, of Goethe, of Agassiz and Owen and Darwin in zoology and botany, are the fruits,—a hint whose power is not yet exhausted, showing unity and perfect order in physics.

The hardest chemist, the severest analyzer, scornful of all but dryest fact, is forced to keep the poetic curve of Nature, and his result is like a myth of Theocritus. All multiplicity rushes to be resolved into unity. Anatomy, osteology, exhibit arrested or progressive ascent in each kind, the lower pointing to the higher forms, the higher to the highest, from the fluid in an elastic sack, from radiate, mollusk, vertebrate, up to man; as if the whole animal world were only a Hunterian museum to exhibit the genesis of mankind.

Identity of law, perfect order in physics, perfect parallelism between the laws of Nature and the laws of thought exist. In botany we have the like, the poetic perception of metamorphosis,—that the same vegetable point or eye which is the unit of the plant can be transformed at pleasure into every part, as bract, leaf, petal, stamen, pistil, seed. . . .

. . . Natural objects, if individually described and out of connection, are not yet known, since they are really parts of

> a symmetrical universe, like words of a sentence; and if their true order is found, the poet can read their divine significance orderly as in a Bible. Each animal and vegetable form remembers the next inferior and predicts the next higher.

These paragraphs illustrate extremely well the insensible degrees by which Emerson passed from the progressive-development phase of thought to the strictly evolutionary. In this lecture, Emerson's constant theme is the familiar one of identity of law in nature. The first paragraph is a restatement of Coleridge's scale-of-being paragraph in *Aids to Reflection*, and much of the rest harks back to his essays on method in *The Friend*. In the meantime, Emerson has been reading in Davy's *Elements of Chemistry*. But he still remembers his Coleridge. At any rate, there is a close resemblance between what he and Coleridge have to say of the "charm of chemistry." The polarity of thought is another Coleridge notion; and Emerson's final sentence is distinctly Coleridgean. There is nothing evolutionary in the transformations of grub, *etc.*; these are eternal commonplaces of zoology.

The only paragraphs in which the evolutionary implications are marked are the two beginning with "the electric word pronounced by John Hunter." There is nothing in Coleridge about the electric word, "arrested and progressive development." Nor apparently can it be found in Hunter. In his *Journals*, however, Emerson refers to the phrase "arrested development" as occurring in *Vestiges of Creation*. And, indeed, we do find in Chambers references to the development of animals being arrested, and in connection with theories of Hunter. There are also in Chambers the usual references to "progressive forms in the development of individuals" and to "the succession of animal forms in the course of time."

So that Emerson found here the words "arrested," "progressive," and "development" all used together in connection with old John Hunter. And his "grand conception" takes on, under Chambers's wand, evolutionary implications which it did not have for Hunter himself nor, certainly, for Coleridge.

Saint-Hilaire had taken on evolutionary implications in Lyell, which were reinforced by Chambers and Stallo. In the meantime, Emerson had come on the theories of Lorenz Oken, a follower of Schelling but a true evolutionist in a queer sort of way. He is particularly known for his theory of the origin of life in the *Ur-Schleim*. Emerson's "fluid in an elastic sack" refers perhaps to the "infusoria," or microscopically minute bladders with a fluid content, which make up the primary sea-slime of Oken's theory. In 1831 Emerson regarded the theory of spontaneous generation (or "equivocal generation") as a scientific humbug. But his views had presumably altered since reading Chambers and Stallo.

Of the other scientists in his list, the only certain evolutionist is Darwin. But Emerson now, presumably, read them all in the light of evolution,—the only light which, in the long run, makes sense out of their discoveries and classifications. The theory of evolution, like its predecessor and parent, the theory of progressive development, had now come to be the supreme example of what he had all along been seeking in natural history,—"identity of law, perfect order in physics, perfect parallelism between the laws of nature and the laws of thought." The later theory completed the other, and was now indistinguishable from it. And in listing its proponents, he did not try to distinguish between those who prepared the ground for evolution and those who occupied its advanced position.

It was Emerson's Transcendentalism that made it possible for him to accept evolution without a qualm. His fluid theology put up none of the resistances that Coleridge's did to the "bestial theory." But it was also his Transcendentalism that prevented him from drawing from evolution the conclusions that Swinburne and Meredith drew or making the applications which are made by all thorough-going naturalists. Whatever the origins of Transcendentalism, it fed on what it found congenial, and confirmed itself by appeal to the Neo-Platonists, to Swedenborg, to the Indian and Persian sages. As he goes on, Emerson's idealism becomes more and more self-assured. The more he learns of natural history, the more certain he is that it is all a projection of the mind, an expression of the inherent moral purpose of the universe which is found in the human spirit.

Thus in the years following his reading of Stallo, we find him laying down propositions like this: "That Nature works after the same method as the human imagination. That Nature makes flowers, as the mind makes images. . . . That organic matter, and mind, got from the same law, so correspond." On the basis of Stallo he distinguishes three eras in men's attitude towards nature: the Greek era, when they deified nature; the Christian, when they looked on nature as an evil; and the Modern, which began in reaction against "the too idealistic tendencies of the Christian period"—but "now the tendency is to marry mind to Nature, and to put Nature under the mind, convert the world into the instrument of Right Reason."

This sounds very fine,—converting the world into the instrument of Right Reason; but it appears in suspicious company, with the idea of putting nature "under the mind." What is involved here may be no more

than a matter of emphasis. But it is true that Emerson almost invariably views nature all too blandly through the eyes of the "mind," reading it in the light of "innate ideas" and all the hoary preconceptions of "idealism." Almost never does it occur to him that the mind may have something to learn from nature, from the world which it finds given to it from without. This is the secret of his fondness for Swedenborg and Hegel, as well as Schelling, in this later period. In 1854 he writes, "This age is Swedenborg's" because of our determination to "repudiate the Hebrew ideas, and embrace the subjective philosophy of the Saxons, that *the soul makes its own world.*" As for Hegel, Emerson finds his form of evolutionism attractive because in it the "unfolding" is *an unfolding of nature from the mind:*

> Nature is brute, but as this [unity with mind] animates it,—only a language, a noun, for the poet. Nature always the effect; mind the flowing cause. . . . Mind contains the law; History is the slow and atomic unfolding. . . . Ever the ascending effort. . . . Natural Sciences have made a great stride by means of Hegel's dogma, which put Nature, and thought, matter and spirit, in right relation, one the expression or externalization of the other.

That Hegel's dogma had anything to do with the strides made by natural science is extremely doubtful. Science made its great strides, in the nineteenth century, as in the eighteenth, seventeenth, and sixteenth, by the cool and patient application of the inductive method, by bold experiment and hypothesis constantly controlled by observation. Science goes on under any metaphysic that will leave it alone. But it was an emotional necessity for Emerson to suppose that an idealistic metaphysic was essential to good science. This is the reason why he never rightly understood the implications of evolution,—that man, being, as Emerson once made bold to say,

"only a piece of the universe made alive," has everything to learn from the universe, the world of things—about nature, about himself, his own mind, his moral being, and his very spirit. Emerson was so anxious to read ethical meanings into nature that he never stopped to inquire where man got these ethical concepts. He took for granted that they are somehow given *a priori:* eternally inherent in the intellectual system of the universe. He never glimpsed the idea that ethical concepts may be themselves the product of evolution, and that consequently, in appraising them, something may be learned by studying the conditions under which they came into being.

This is why his very ethical system is provincial—inadequate to the appraisement of a Goethe, for example. It is provincial because it is arbitrary and traditional, because it has not been put through any process of rational criticism. It is infinitely less suited to meet the conditions of men living in society than the Renaissance system of Goethe. I recognize that the Transcendentalists were religious and ethical liberals. Their liberalism was a great solvent of dogma. But it was not critical and radical because it had too exclusively emotional and romantic a cast. Their ethical ideals were at once "eternal" and vague; whereas the ethical ideals of naturalism are both relative and precise, being the acknowledged product of human needs in contact with social and material conditions.

There can be no question of the historical importance of the Transcendental movement. Human nature being what it is, it was an absolutely necessary step in the transition from supernaturalism to naturalism. Without it these religious and sensitive souls would have altogether foundered, and civilization would have suffered

more damage than it has. Under cover of Transcendentalism naturalism was enabled to make great advances. But the Transcendentalists did not themselves develop the possibilities of naturalism. They approached things from the wrong side. They lost themselves in the fogs of mysticism. They followed after strange gods. In Emerson, to employ the electric word of John Hunter, naturalism suffered an "arrested development."

TRAGEDY AND THE FIRST TRAGEDIAN

E. T. Owen

How much of our conception of the Tragic is there in the tragedies of Aeschylus? The name "Tragedy" has in itself no "tragic" implications, and Aeschylus lived before the days of tragic theories. So far as we can see, the thing was largely in his hands to make what he liked of it. Was what he made of it Tragedy in our sense—in substance, I mean, not in form? Was his conception of the "tragic fact" (as Bradley calls it) fundamentally the same as ours or even Aristotle's? Or, rather, did he aim at being "tragic" at all?

Of the type of story with which Tragedy dealt before Aeschylus (for, strictly speaking, he is the first tragedian only in the sense that the work of his predecessors is lost), the most definite evidence I know is Aristotle's statement in the *Poetics*: "At first the poets recounted any stories they could find, but now the best tragedies are composed about a few houses, such as about Alcmaeon, Oedipus, Orestes, and any others to whom it happened to suffer or to do terrible things." As Aristotle was writing for persons who presumably knew the facts, we are not justified in taking the first part of his statement quite literally; the occasion, we may assume, to some extent limited the poets in their choice, but clearly they were not restricted to subjects tragic in Aristotle's sense or our own. What the tragedians did, according to Aristotle, was to find, by slow experimentation, the most effective sort of story to present under dramatic conditions; their plays were all tragedies in virtue of their technical form, but, in his view, those

which moved an audience most deeply and directly were the ones that revealed the essential nature of the form; they showed what it could do best, and, therefore, what it was "meant" to be. That is how Aristotle arrives at pity and fear as the essential tragic emotions—not essential in the sense of necessary to the existence of the thing, but as bringing out most fully the emotional capacity of the form; they are, in short, the most dramatically effective emotions to arouse.

We may safely say, then, I think, that the "tragic" was not in the mind of Aeschylus as a conscious aim imposed by the conditions of his art. He could choose his subjects pretty well to suit himself and, within the limits of the form, treat them how he liked; so that, if the result is Tragedy, it was something other than the name and what it stood for that made it so. And anyone turning from Aristotle's tragic formula to the *Oresteia* must feel that even if the formula is partly involved therein, it is simply dwarfed. A great man falling from prosperity to adversity through error or otherwise—the theme can be extracted from it, but would it ever have occurred to us to call it the subject of the *Oresteia*? And certainly Aeschylus was not led to his shaping of the Orestes story by the simple desire to bring out the fearful and pitiable possibilities of the theme. He does so without doubt, but not for their own sakes; they are incidental. He found pity and fear along the route he was following and used them for all they were worth, but they were not his goal.

Two things, as it seems to me, were chiefly instrumental in determining the general shape of his tragic plot—*viz.*, the function of the form with which he was dealing, and his individual interpretation of the sig-

nificance of that function. The upshot is that he tackles the primary problem of man's place in the universe.

For the modern reader the approach to Aeschylean drama cannot be direct. If we read and judge it simply by our own dramatic standards, very little of it is interesting or even artistically intelligible. There are many impressive passages of poetry and occasionally highly dramatic scenes, but even the *Agamemnon*, the most satisfying to us of his plays, is to our ears so clogged with undramatic matter that, as Verrall points out in his attempt to establish its dramatic integrity, its reputation as a drama really rests upon about half of it. More than that, if we take the *Agamemnon* as the supreme example of Aeschylean Tragedy and are satisfied that its plot conforms on the whole to our notions of what makes a tragic plot, we are ignoring the fact that it is not Aeschylus' plot, but just the first step, the preparation for it. His plot stretches through the whole trilogy—from the crimes in the House of Atreus represented in the *Agamemnon* and *Choephoroe* to the blessings poured on the city of Athens by the mollified Erinyes in the closing scenes of the *Eumenides*, a surprising and, by our standards, an irrelevant ending. Appreciation of the drama (as we understand the word) in the work of Aeschylus takes us but a little way towards understanding what he is about. The point is not that his plays are undramatic, but that we have to learn his dramatic language before we can hear his drama. And this means something more than becoming familiar with his theatrical conventions as such; it means adjusting our minds to a fundamentally different dramatic mode.

The *Supplices*, perhaps, brings out the difference most sharply, because, satisfying least our requirements, it thrusts upon our notice the aspects we tend to ignore

in such a play as the *Agamemnon*. It may be urged, and generally is, that the *Supplices*, as being probably the earliest of the extant plays, is naturally more primitive than one written at the end of his life; but Aeschylus did not create Tragedy, and when he composed the *Supplices* he was not consciously a pioneer fumbling towards a new art reached in the *Agamemnon*; he was already a master craftsman handling with magnificent assurance an existent and fully-developed one, and the *Agamemnon* itself comes to its own, artistically, only when related to the same dramatic genus.

For the *Supplices* is, on its own plane, dramatic. We miss this quality in it because we look in the wrong direction for its interest, because we read it simply as primitive drama, which, as a matter of historical fact, it happens to be. But it is not primarily nor mainly primitive drama; it is within its own kind a finished artistic production. It has often been compared to a modern oratorio, and the analogy, if too much is not expected of it, is helpful as a guide and corrective. Tragedy was, in Aeschylus' time, basically a Choral performance which presented by the singing of a choir a known and hallowed story with a view to its religious significance; and when we mark the dramatic deficiencies of such a work as the *Supplices*, though we are quite right, we are almost as much off the point as we should be if we criticized the *St. Matthew Passion* for its lack of movement and action. The "dramatic" interest, in the one case as in the other, is not in the story, does not lie along the line of the play of events; it is identical with the interest in the artistry; in following the technique, we are following the drama.

The story was not the thing in Aeschylean Tragedy; the form into which it was cast furnished the essentials

of the plot. This form was in origin a religious ritual performed by a choir with a religious purpose. That is, the technique was, at bottom, a functional technique; it was a way of getting into touch with spiritual powers, and its object was to effect by ritual the welfare of the community. This original purpose has determined the shape in which Aeschylus presented his stories. The Athenian choir had its place as a choir within the story, and exercised therein its ritual functions, the effect of which comprised, in a way to be described, the chief dramatic interest.

The *Supplices* shows how the daughters of Danaus, fleeing from their home in Egypt to avoid marriage with the sons of Aegyptus, found refuge in Argos, the city of their ancestress Io. It is shown in this way: the daughters of Danaus are seen in the character of a choir singing the ritual hymns which won them the help they sought. The Athenian choir appears as the daughters of Danaus —that is easy and obvious; but what we tend to overlook, or at least miss the point of, is that the daughters of Danaus are, dramatically, a choir and that, in consequence, the drama here lies in the spectacle of a choir at its work of influencing a situation by ritual acts and ritual words. The play is the dramatization of the religious ceremony by which the daughters of Danaus, in virtue of their Choral character, constrained or sought to constrain Zeus (principally) to support their cause. It is, through this, also the telling of their story; for one sees the course of the story being shaped through the power of their ritual.

The choir marches into the orchestra of the theatre, singing; and, as they sing, the scene takes shape in the imagination of the spectator: the daughters of Danaus are approaching a sacred precinct on the sea-coast near

Argos; it is they who are singing; they are a choir and are performing a Choral rite; therefore the dramatic assumption is that what they sing is endued with ritual power, and, as the spectator knows the outcome of the story, what he is watching is their words shadowing forth and shaping the forms of things to come. There is the main thread of dramatic interest.

> Why should I mention Io?
> I have no notion why.

So Housman, in his famous parody of an Aeschylean tragedy, makes his Chorus sing, obviously alluding to the recurring theme of the odes in this play. But the reason why they harp on Io is plain enough. They tell over and over again the story of Io, how she was loved by Zeus and suffered for that love, because not only does it stress the fact that they are through her the offspring of Zeus himself and therefore have a peculiar claim upon him, but also her story is, as they hope, a symbol of theirs, of their sufferings and of their final deliverance. They are, they would say, Io over again. In them she returns to Argos, and they claim the happy outcome of her sufferings as a foreshadowing of their own release from persecution. By repeating it under these solemn conditions they hope to make it so. Thus the poet uses the Io theme to carry and symbolize the religious significance of this story as he saw it. Although we do not possess the other plays belonging to the trilogy (except for about ten lines of the third part), the general development can be guessed with fair certainty. The other two plays would tell the rest of the story—*viz.*, that the Argives were defeated in the conflict with the sons of Aegyptus, that the hated marriage did take place, that all the brides except one, Hypermnestra, killed their husbands on the wedding night, and that she became the ancestress

of Perseus, of Heracles, and the Danaan kings of Argos. "The theme of the whole trilogy is the mysterious will of Zeus, who produces good out of apparent evil, and is working through the suffering of the suppliants, through the horror of the murder at night, to the prosperity of a noble city. The prayers of the suppliants are apparently rejected in the second part; in the third part the acquittal of Hypermnestra is the token that in an unexpected way, through her descendants, the city is after all to be blessed".—(Sheppard)

The Chorus, then, invoke the case of Io because it establishes their claim as her descendants upon the favour of Zeus, because in her descendants her story is being enacted again, and because they think, in their shortsightedness, that the repeated recitation of her final deliverance and the blessings that fell upon her will ensure the triumph of their cause. And the story of Io *is* worked out again, but on a vaster scale than they could contemplate, and with a view to greater purposes than their individual happiness. That is why the poet associates with it another theme, of which it is the sign and symbol—the inscrutable ways of God:

> Though the deep will of Zeus be hard to track,
> Yet doth it flame and glance,
> A beacon in the dark, 'mid clouds of chance
> That wrap mankind.
> Yea, though the counsel fall, undone it shall not lie,
> Whate'er be shaped and fixed within Zeus' ruling mind.
> Dark as a solemn grove, with sombre leafage shaded,
> His paths of purpose wind,
> A marvel to man's eye.—[Morshead's translation]

These are the two chief strains that run through their singing, and both, so sung, affect the sequel—achieving the success of their immediate aim, the long postponement of the blessings they foresee. They are "sewing at

once with a double thread," the double pattern of their lives—one pattern completed within this play, which turns out to be but part of the larger pattern that, without knowing or intending it, they have themselves begun. By the repetition of Io's story they do, as they expect, ensure the success of their appeal, and by the thought they associate with it ensure also that the larger implication of her story should be repeated in their case.

I have said enough to indicate wherein the action consists. The incidents that occur are not the action, they are the occasion for it; that is, they do little more than punctuate the ceremony with the events that mark its progress towards the consummation of its purpose and direct the special character of the Chorus's successive efforts. Because the Chorus, in virtue of its sacred office, forms a link between earth and heaven, we see in what happens as a result of their rite the purpose of heaven being wrought out through the given human circumstances. For that is how Aeschylus has dramatized the rite. His Choruses sing their hymns with a view to the immediate dramatic situation, and, because of their limited knowledge and narrow vision, may win an apparent success or may inadvertently help to bring to pass unforeseen and undesired results, but the poet takes advantage of the spectator's knowledge of the outcome to make him feel another greater purpose running through and guiding their utterance to foreshadow and fashion the far-off divine event which, when it comes, reveals the whole as a designed harmony. The object of the original ceremony being to win the favour and aid of heaven for the welfare of the community, Aeschylus has made Tragedy the dramatic spectacle of the ultimate establishment of man's welfare out of the evils that surround him; he shows the slow

shaping of many sorrowful and terrible events to a prosperous and beneficent issue.

The theme of the *Supplices* trilogy, which stretches from Io tortured hideously in apparent caprice, through a long series of sufferings and sins, to the Argive kingdom set at the height of its greatness, is a typical Aeschylean "plot." The intimate relation of the Chorus to the story here, and the comparative shallowness of the poet's thought, make it more patent to us in this case than in the later and better known plays, and for that reason the *Supplices* is for us the key to Aeschylean drama. The plot of the *Oresteia*, the last of his works, follows the same general lines, though with a much more complex structure and far profounder implications. For one thing, the poet has developed enormously his power of handling the actor scenes, but that should not mislead us into thinking that the centre of his art has shifted from orchestra to stage. This is no place for an analysis of the structure of the *Oresteia*, but that the "stage" action is kept well under control to a different artistic purpose, every disappointed reader of the last two plays of the trilogy can bear witness. In the *Choephoroe* he hurries over what we regard as the dramatic part of the play, and its centre is the great lyric scene in which Orestes, Electra, and the Chorus use all the resources of ritual to rouse the spirit of the dead Agamemnon and the powers of the lower world to assist them in their work of vengeance; in the *Eumenides* the Chorus is as much the protagonist as in the *Supplices*, and Orestes and his story drop out of sight as Olympians and Chthonians face one another in their final struggle for the soul of the world.

The *raison d'être* of a religious rite rests upon the belief that the seen may be influenced by the unseen;

its purpose is to bring the spiritual order to bear on the sensible temporal order. It is this that has given Aeschylus his subject; his scene is set, we might say, by the fact that the action takes place on the dancing-floor where the Chorus performed its ancient powerful ritual, that is, it lies at the point where the two worlds touch. "Aeschylus," says Professor Macneile Dixon, "is beyond all dramatists a theologian, a man of God, turning always in thought back from earthly scenes and events to the primal and ultimate things, the beginnings, ends, and purposes of the world." But not only in thought; he endeavours to depict the actual turning of the earthly scenes and events into their primal and ultimate equivalents, invoking (literally) their full spiritual context, showing that such is not only what they signify, it is what they are.

So, broadly it may be said that what his Tragedy depicts is man seen against the background of the universe. Does he, then, regard this spectacle as a tragic one? I cannot believe that anyone who reads his plays unbiassed by associations of the name "Tragedy" can come to such a conclusion. They might rather be described as an earlier, differently-based version of the Divine Comedy. Their typical ending is a "happy" ending, if not for the individuals concerned, at least for mankind. They celebrate and represent victory: they tell the story of a triumph—to put it in its most prosaic form, the triumph of civilization. Though the legends he chose were generally of terrible and sorrowful things, he chose them, it seems to me, not primarily for the sake of their tragic qualities, but because such events present most sharply, most insistently, the problem of "man's place in his mysterious dwelling, the unriddled universe;" they challenge, as we say, the meaning of life.

In the fact that he deals with this problem and in his manner of dealing with it we have, I think, the features of his work which have stamped themselves into the meaning of the word "Tragedy". It is a superficial judgment which describes his tragedy as the Tragedy of Fate, as a picture of men struggling helplessly in the toils of destiny. If we confine our attention to the individuals of the story, it may appear so, but that is just what Aeschylus has not done, and we are inclined to find fault with him for not so confining his attention. His interest lies not so much in the struggling individuals as in the weaving of the web of destiny. Mr. Dobrée (in *Restoration Tragedy*) declares that Tragedy always illustrates the sort of thing that happens to mankind. That is explicitly Aeschylus' subject; his hero is man, not a man. Instead of universalizing the particular, he appears to particularize the universal. The special case does not only illustrate the sort of thing that happens to mankind; it is what has happened to mankind. But why it has so happened, Aeschylus does not presume to say. The end is not a solution of the mystery. Even in the *Supplices* the inscrutable will of Zeus remains inscrutable. The *Oresteia* is apparently dominated by the same conception, but, though in this one case we have every step before us, the mystery is deeper. "In the *Oresteia*," says Professor Norwood, "a man is hunted well-nigh to death because he has obeyed the will of God. Why? It can only be said that until the judgment in the *Eumenides* all is nebulous, the world is being governed desperately as by some committee of public safety; morals, justice, and equity are still upon the anvil." In the peace and reconciliation with which it ends, the will of Zeus prevails, no doubt; but was it known at the outset to Zeus? The deeds of men affect the gods

as surely as those of the gods affect men. Gods and men are bound upon the same adventure, and, Aeschylus seems to say, the gracious and humane, but infinitely precarious, compromise of civilization, by which man has come to a working arrangement with the fierce primal instincts within him and the hostile forces without, is the outward and visible sign of the harmony which holds all the discordant elements of the universe together.

In the face of this obscurity in the complete *Oresteia*, we can say with confidence that the mysteriousness of the *Prometheus* is not mainly due to the loss of the other two plays of the trilogy. That Zeus and Prometheus were reconciled we know; but beyond the fact that it was so, and that from their strife and reconciliation emerged the present world-order, the poet, we may be sure, did not go. What he has given us is, ultimately, a picture of man's mind facing the dark and hostile powers of the universe, and, if not conquering them, compelling them to come to terms with it on the basis of his demands for intelligibility and righteousness. This conception is so plainly expressed in the *Prometheus* as to make it almost allegory. Prometheus is the civilized mind of man set back in an inchoate universe and so feeling with full consciousness the sufferings that marked mankind's struggle towards civilization. And more than that: man has taken upon him the burden of the universe; he is its mind, and as such the instrument through which it becomes conscious of itself, with all that is thus involved of consciousness of its pain and sorrow and mystery. But the thing eludes final expression; most of it escapes when we try to formulate its meaning. I do not think that Aeschylus was intentionally obscure just to be mysterious. He was seriously engaged in seeking for explanations of fundamental religious problems,

which are in the nature of things insoluble and therefore of the very stuff of religion, and what he has put down is not his explanations but his search.

And is not such a treatment of such a theme fundamentally what we still demand of Tragedy? Is it not because a play expresses, but does not explain, the mystery of man's relation to the universe that we tend to set it apart in a separate category, and cling to the name under which Aeschylus first gave the theme artistic expression? Not because it seeks to move us to tears or to rouse pity and fear, or for any such lesser objectives, but because in some way it sets forth the ultimate fact, because it brings man and the universe together on the same stage in some great symbolical action which expresses satisfyingly to the imagination the mystery of their relationship and leaves it a mystery still. "Tragedy of whatever type," declares Macneile Dixon, "to remain Tragedy, must refuse to make all things plain, must prostrate itself before the unknown, nor presume with the sentimentalists lightly to interpret the hieroglyphics of destiny." If it be asked, why *must* it? the answer is, it is the compulsion of a great example. Aeschylus has given the word a significance which it cannot shake off, and the questions we raise as to whether this or that is necessary to Tragedy—the unhappy ending, the death of the hero, his culpability, and so on—are concerned with the accidents. What we are really asking is whether this way or that way is necessary to produce the effect of Aeschylus. All later tragedies get their ultimate standing in that august category according as they approximate to the height of his great argument.

THE PHYSICAL STRUCTURE OF CANADA

A. P. Coleman

CANADA, with an area of 3,603,910 square miles, is one of the largest countries in the world and surpasses Australia and India among the divisions of the British Commonwealth, and also the United States; so that its ten million people seem to have ample room to expand. But area alone by no means determines the prosperity of a nation. It may prove a hampering influence and a danger where a small population is scattered in widely separated regions having different interests and different outlets for their commerce. In earlier days there was a real risk that British North America, peopled by separate groups on the Atlantic, the Great Lakes, the Prairies, and the Pacific, might never unite to form a single nation, since apparently impassable barriers separated the different parts of the country. There was a time when Nova Scotians talked of "going to Canada;" and even yet there is sometimes a hint of separatism, and certain curious forms of speech point toward disjunctive trends. If a dweller in central Canada speaks of going to the "coast" it is well understood that he is bound for the Pacific. In the popular mind of Ontario there is no Atlantic coast. On the other hand the "Maritime Provinces" do not include British Columbia, although its coast-line is vastly longer than that of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick combined.

The separate groups into which the country is naturally divided have, of course, their foundation in the geological history of Canada, going back, in part, for more than a billion years. Some of our difficulties

in developing the country can be traced to mountain-building operations dating from the world's earliest youth; and some of our most important resources are found in very ancient formations of which the history is obscure. On the other hand, our sources of water power and our Great Lakes (for navigation) have come to us from the most recent period of geological history when great ice-sheets covered the land.

The economic development of Canada is very closely bound up with the distribution of the rocks, and the minerals they contain; and her routes of communication have been largely determined by physiographic features.

Roughly speaking, the geological map of Canada can be divided into two nearly equal parts: one which took shape in Pre-Cambrian times, consisting mainly of very ancient igneous and crystalline rocks, and another including all the later formations, mostly sedimentary, often still lying much as they were laid down on the sea bottom, but in places faulted or folded or penetrated by later eruptive rocks. This twofold division of the geological formations is not symmetrical, however, since the ancient rocks lie mainly on the north-eastern side and the later sediments occupy three separate areas, a small and narrow one to the south-east, a very broad one to the south-west, and a scattered group around Hudson Bay and in the arctic islands to the north. The distribution here indicated has profoundly influenced the development of the country.

An outline of the geology of Canada naturally begins with the vast foundation of ancient rocks generally called the Canadian or Pre-Cambrian Shield, which not only makes half of its surface but underlies, sometimes at no great depth, all the later formations. For the most part these fundamental rocks are granite and

gneiss, which were once molten, but it is astonishing to find that the earliest rocks of all were formed under water. The Grenville series of southern Ontario and Quebec consists largely of limestone, and the Keewatin rocks of the north and north-west, though mainly lava and volcanic ash, include long bands of "iron formation" of quartz and ore in alternate layers, evidently laid down under water. One of the most puzzling enigmas of Canadian geology here presents itself: no floor has been found beneath the Grenville sediments and the Keewatin lavas. They are always cradled in the Laurentian granite and gneiss which rose from beneath as molten magma, swelling up as great oval batholiths and squeezing the earlier rocks into synclines between them.

Our Pre-Cambrian Shield, now presenting a rough surface of low hills, began as a succession of great mountain ranges, worn down through succeeding ages into mere stumps and remnants, forming a peneplain with no important elevations, though some parts of its southern edge have been called the Laurentide Mountains.

The levelling of the Archaean mountain ranges was largely accomplished in very ancient times; thousands of feet of rock were removed, thus leaving in most of the area only the foundations of barren Laurentian granite, of little value from the human point of view. But before the end of the Pre-Cambrian there were fresh eruptions, of much economic importance. Algoman granite and certain basic rocks, such as diabase and norite, pushed up through the older rocks, the former bringing deposits of the most desired but most useless of the metals, gold, and the latter providing silver, nickel, and copper, to be exploited in the recent development of the country. It is the coming in of these later Pre-Cambrian eruptives which prepared the way for the

mining regions of northern Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec, which will be mentioned later.

After this immensely long period of dry-land conditions during which mountains were built and destroyed, large parts of the Shield were lowered beneath a shallow sea on whose floor marine sediments accumulated and the Palaeozoic stage of the world's history began. Hundreds, or even thousands, of feet of shale and sandstone and limestone were spread out, especially round the edges of the peneplain, so that Palaeozoic rocks cover most of southern Ontario and Quebec and large parts of the Maritime Provinces, while in the Rocky Mountains they have been pushed into folds or thrust as huge blocks upon one another and so are splendidly displayed. It is mainly the early and middle parts of the Palaeozoic which are developed in Canada. The last division, the Carboniferous, which includes most of the world's coal, unfortunately covers only small areas in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the arctic islands of the far north, while coal deposits are wanting in the central provinces.

Coming to Mesozoic times, we find the relations reversed: the earlier subdivisions occupy very little space, while the Cretaceous, the uppermost division, is very widely spread in the prairie region. Our Cretaceous rocks include no chalk but are largely a land formation. It was a time of great indecision in the West, the plains standing nearly at sea-level, sometimes a little below it, but more often a little above, with broad marshes in which luxuriant vegetation provided material for vast deposits of lignite in Saskatchewan and of better coal in Alberta, important possessions in a region of cold winters. Other relics of the era survive. The abundant flora supplied food for a strange fauna of reptiles: the

dinosaurs, uncouth and often gigantic bipeds and quadrupeds—the most grotesque inhabitants on record in Canada, whose bones weather out of the cliffs along the Red Deer River to astonish later and more intelligent populations.

With the end of the Cretaceous, and the passing of the dinosaurs, the Cenozoic or "age of mammals" began, the time of "recent life" when a start was made toward our present conditions. In its first division, the Eocene, the western mountain system was completed, the ancient Gold Ranges and the more recent Coast Range being flanked toward the east by our youngest mountain chain, the Rockies, cutting off the region of the plains beyond from the moisture and mildness which had reached them from the Pacific and so changing the climate that the rampant tree growth and swampy conditions of the Mesozoic gave place to the dry climate and severe winters of the present-day prairie.

By many geologists the Cenozoic is considered to include the present age, though some, with perhaps an exaggerated appreciation of the importance of humanity, would distinguish a latest "zoic" division—the Psychozoic.

This latest, or Pleistocene, division of geologic time, quite negligible in length as compared with the others, has some justification for standing as a separate age because of its dramatic beginning. The old and worn-out earth of the past was swept by the cold breath of an ice invasion and thus prepared for a new set of conditions. The parts of the world covered by the great Pleistocene ice-sheets were in many ways completely transformed, and this process of renewal was nowhere more complete than in Canada. More than once almost the whole country underwent glaciation, and for thous-

ands of years Canada was buried under ice-sheets and void of plants or animals except on a few outstanding peaks and tablelands like the Shickshock Mountains in Gaspé, the Yukon region, and possibly parts of the arctic islands. When the desert of ice came to an end, Canada was a completely changed country, ready to be colonized afresh with a flora and fauna immigrating from the south. We owe our present plants and animals, except as introduced by man himself, to the open door toward unglaciated parts of North America.

Most of Canada is supposed to have been mantled with the debris of half-a-billion years of weathering and decay before the Pleistocene began. Except in the recently built Rocky Mountains it was in a state of extreme old age from the point of view of the physiographer, and, so far as our information goes, had a surface of deeply weathered rock drained by long-established and mature rivers unbroken by a waterfall or a lake.

Then came the glacier, the most powerful of geologic agencies, working on the most gigantic scale known, to transform our physiography, scouring the higher parts of the Pre-Cambrian Shield into rounded hills of fresh rock and dumping its spoils in all sorts of unexpected places. Every valley of the olden time was somewhere blocked by a moraine, and ranges of hills, sometimes hundreds of feet in height, were built over what had been level plains.

When the climate became warmer the ice-sheets slowly melted, but not at a uniform rate. When these were half gone the climate grew cold again and the ice-front halted for thousands of years, forming gigantic dams to hold up the waters of glacial lakes like Agassiz in Manitoba and Algonquin and Iroquois in Ontario,

leaving, when the dam was finally thawed away, plains of rich silty soil where the deeper waters had lain, and useful bars of sand and gravel built by the waves across river valleys along the old shores. Over most of the country, however, the glacier left in its retreat a coat of till, or boulder clay, often stony, as the name suggests, but charged with lime and potash and phosphates, elements of fertility for the enrichment of the farmer's fields.

As the ice-sheets withdrew from their farthest limits, the sea followed up the retreating front, since the land had not yet recovered from the load of ice that had depressed it, and marine clay was widely spread on the lower plains of the Maritime Provinces, Quebec, and eastern Ontario. When the ice-load was completely removed, the land rose to its present level and the muddy sea-bottom, thus exposed, provided the best of soils.

The most important single industry of Canada, that of farming, owes its success, then, very largely to the work of the ice-sheets, almost all of our agricultural land having undergone a renovation in one way or another during the Glacial period. The relatively dense population of the lowland belt along the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes settled there on account of the fertile soil which was the result of the ice itself, of glacial lakes, or of the invading sea; and from this population came settlers for the rest of Canada. The flat, rich, prairie soil of the Winnipeg region is inherited from glacial Lake Agassiz, three times the size of Lake Superior; the wheat-fields of Regina are the result of another glacial lake; and the great "clay belt" of northern Quebec and Ontario, with its spreading colonization by farming com-

munities, represents the bottom mud of glacial Lake Ojibway.

But rich farm lands are by no means all of the boons conferred on Canada by the ice-sheets. The haphazard piling of glacial moraines dammed all the ancient valleys and dowered the country with innumerable lakes of all sizes, so that almost every part is within reach of a body of pure water. For the same reason all our rivers are youthful, leaping over precipices as water-falls or pouring as foamy rapids down steep declivities and providing inexhaustible sources of power.

To the positive features of the country thus far outlined should be added one or two of a negative character but of great significance for our economic development. There have, doubtless, been, during its long history, many movements of parts of our territory both up and down; but in a few regions the predominant movement has been downward, breaking the solid outline of the continent by great inlets of the sea. A northern one gives access to the centre of Canada by Hudson Strait, leading into the rather bleak Mediterranean of Hudson Bay; and a much more useful one on the south penetrates far into the continent as the Gulf of St. Lawrence. There is good reason to believe that both inlets of the ocean are due to the dropping of blocks of the crust. It is probable that at one time the Atlantic coast of Canada was continuous, with a smooth outline like that of the United States to the south; but a general depression submerged the eastern valleys, creating the strangely tattered coast-line of Labrador, Newfoundland, and Nova Scotia, where inlets and harbours are numberless and every fishing village has its own snug port. But, in addition, there was a more profound sinking of the Palaeozoic beds south of the

Archaean Shield from the Straits of Belle Isle to Quebec along a line of faulting which is still alive as shown by recent earthquakes. The long and well-sheltered sea route to the mouth of our most valuable river, the St. Lawrence, with its chain of navigable Great Lakes, may well be considered the foundation of Canada as a separate nation. A similar general depression on the Pacific coast has given British Columbia its labyrinth of fiords and islands, without a long navigable route to the interior, yet of value for coastal traffic.

The importance of the ownership of two great world ports, Montreal and Vancouver, on the two most important oceans, can hardly be overestimated as a factor in the development of our economic life; and the settling down of the land, forming the tattered fringe of islands and inlets on the east and the west, has been a great aid to settlement and commerce.

Summing up the outline just given of our geological and physiographic features, we find an immense north-eastern portion consisting mainly of a very ancient peneplain of rugged hills and lakes, the Canadian Shield, with a fringe of Palaeozoic sediments toward the south-east, and a broad and flat prairie land of Mesozoic beds to the south-west, but cut off from the Pacific by ranges of mountains of different ages, the youngest, and in general the highest, rising as a wall to the west of the great plains.

The Pre-Cambrian region is drained chiefly toward Hudson Bay, which should have been called Hudson Sea; the south-eastern fringe of lowlands is mainly tributary to the St. Lawrence; and the great interior plain sends its waters to Hudson Bay by Nelson River and to the Arctic Ocean by Mackenzie River, both, owing to a rigorous climate, unfortunate termini for navigation.

The great belt of mountains, four hundred miles wide along the Pacific, has many lakes and also great rivers but very little useful navigation except on the coast; and the three main mountain chains, the Rockies, the Gold Ranges, and the Coast Range, make a very serious barrier to communication between the Prairies and the Pacific.

The development of Canada naturally began where access from swarming Europe was easiest, in the Maritime Provinces and the part of Quebec along the St. Lawrence; and it progressed most rapidly where the level sedimentary rocks of the early-Palaeozoic, fertilized by marine or glacial clays, provided good agricultural land. The Maritime Provinces, cut off from Quebec by the impassable Shickshock Mountains, and with limited areas of farm and fruit land, developed more slowly. Their greatest mineral wealth, the stores of Carboniferous coal in Nova Scotia, requiring a market not too far away, would naturally have served the needs of New England but for the international boundary.

In early days, when the French began to take root and cultivate the rich and readily worked soil of the lowlands along the St. Lawrence, there was only one kind of inland traffic, that in furs, and these light but valuable cargoes could be transported in canoes, easily portaged and well adapted to the "rocky lake" Archaean region which covers half of Canada. During the early pioneering stage the Indian's birch bark carried all the products from the interior to Montreal or to Hudson Bay, and the Pre-Cambrian Shield offered no embarrassment; but the time came when the farm lands of southern Ontario (then Upper Canada) were occupied, and settlers began to spread northwards and westwards, trying vainly to make farms of granite hills and rocky valleys. The

flat prairie of the West was seductive, but almost out of reach beyond the hundreds of miles of wild country north of the Great Lakes which presented a seemingly impassable barrier between the two regions where farms could be cultivated. The inhospitable wilderness of rocks of the ancient formations appeared to have cut Canada hopelessly in two.

On the other side of the continent, also, the barrier of range after range of mountains rose between the sea and the plains, and the welding of the widely separated cultivable regions into a single nation seemed to many eastern Canadians scarcely possible. The building of the Canadian Pacific Railway from sea to sea to tie together the isolated groups of settlements and to unify British America appeared a desperate undertaking for the small population of the country, three-fourths of them dwelling in the few thousand square miles of Palaeozoic formations between the Upper Lakes and the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Then an unlooked-for development changed the whole aspect of the situation. Among the hills of Laurentian granite and gneiss, forbidding in their barrenness, there were belts of old volcanic rocks and sediments, remnants of much greater sheets preserved between the granite foundations of Pre-Cambrian mountains; and there were also areas of later eruptive rocks. These subordinate areas among the Pre-Cambrian hills proved to be metal-bearing, and, in the building of the railway, copper ore was found in a rock cut near Sudbury. With it was an ore of a much more valuable metal, not at first recognized, and soon the mines of Sudbury supplied most of the world's nickel. The development of the mines has opened up great reserves of rich ore, and there

are few mining regions that are so solidly founded as those of Sudbury.

The building of another railway, the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario, led to the discovery of the richest silver deposits worked in modern times, those of Cobalt; and other parts of northern Ontario, near Porcupine and Kirkland Lake, as everyone knows, are gold-mining regions of great importance, producing more than the mines of any other country except South Africa. These ore deposits seem destined to last long, and at least one mine has reached the depth of a mile below the surface. Fortunately the increase in temperature with depth, which everywhere occurs, is unusually slow in these northern gold mines, making deep mining less difficult than in other regions.

In late years the metal-bearing formations have been found to extend to the east into Quebec and to the west into northern Manitoba and Saskatchewan; and the barrier between East and West, once thought insuperable, promises to develop into a storehouse of metals. Gold and silver, nickel and cobalt, lead and zinc, and, latest of all, uranium and radium, are now mined among the rocky hills and beside the clear lakes of the Canadian Shield, and it is no longer the hopeless wilderness which it seemed to the last generation. It is interesting to see this geologically oldest part of Canada, dating back for a thousand million years or more, giving rise to the latest industry of the country and becoming a connecting link between the lowlands of the St. Lawrence and the wheat-growing provinces of the West.

Molten rocks of more than one kind took part in the preparatory work, pushing up through earlier materials and cooling slowly beneath thousands of feet of overlying rock. Thus there was time for ores of nickel and copper

to settle to the lower margin of a norite sheet at Sudbury and for hot solutions to deposit gold and silver and the other metals in fissures of the rocks above in other regions. All this took place in the depths, far out of reach of humanity, until the work of weather and running water and grinding ice during the later ages removed the barren covering and left the veins of ore exposed at the surface for the prospector and the miner to discover.

Another and much more recent link between the fertile regions was presently found in the "clay belt" of glacial and lake deposits, reaching for hundreds of miles from east to west beyond the watershed in northern Ontario and Quebec. Threaded by the Canadian National Railway, this belt is gradually being occupied by settlers who are attracted by the new markets in the growing towns at the mines. The latest geological episode thus joins with some of the earliest events in our geological history to fill the gap between the populous East and the open plains of the West.

The other great impediment to communication was the broad Cordilleran belt of mountains and tablelands cut by deep valleys and canyons, separating the Prairies from the western ocean. This is a barrier which seems to have been growing more formidable during the geological ages, the mountain belts which combine to form the Cordillera coming into existence at widely separated times. The three ranges are also of very different origin. The oldest mountains are the Selkirks and Gold Ranges, beginning probably in Pre-Cambrian times; very much later came the Coast Range, in the Jurassic division of the Mesozoic; and the Rocky Mountains, whose bare cliffs facing the plains of the Prairie Provinces date from the Eocene division of the Cenozoic.

The Selkirks and Gold Ranges are largely formed of

granite and gneiss, and, as the latter name suggests, include auriferous quartz veins, usually too small to be mined, though probably the source of the gold obtained from placer mines. The great and almost unbroken wall of the Coast Range is also of eruptive origin, consisting of a continuous row of batholiths of granite or granodiorite which welled up for thousands of feet along a stretch of eleven hundred miles. In their rise earlier sediments and volcanic rocks were hoisted up and in places caught between batholiths as "roof pendants." These were penetrated by metal-bearing fluids and in places furnish great ore bodies mined on a large scale, producing lead, zinc, and silver, and sometimes also copper and gold, the basis of an important smelting industry. The Coast Range and the Gold Ranges with their batholiths and ore deposits make a strong contrast with the Rocky Mountains proper, which are built almost entirely of sediments and have not a single metal mine, though deposits of Cretaceous coal are worked in some of the valleys.

In earlier days the interior of British Columbia was well known for its rich placer mines, whose gold probably came from quartz "stringers" in the rocks of the Gold Ranges; and there is now a revival of interest in the placers of the Cariboo; but of more importance were the placer deposits of the Klondike in Yukon Territory to the north. The frenzied rush of miners from all over the world to the Klondike was one of the most thrilling episodes in modern gold-mining, and Dawson City, just south of the arctic circle and far beyond the bounds of civilization, had for a year or two nine thousand citizens, mostly able-bodied men, and its streets were full of bustle. Now the territory is occupied only by a few hundred inhabitants, and a half dozen dredges work

low-grade gravels in the river bottoms. The life of a placer-mining region is short as compared with other metal mines which may often be worked to great depths.

Between the ranges of the mountainous province of British Columbia there are long and usually narrow valleys, partly occupied by a lake where the ice-sheet blocked the outlet, providing magnificent scenery and a flat floor of semi-arid soil, unsurpassed for orchard-growing when irrigated; but its alp-lands are not yet grazed by flocks and herds as in Switzerland, and its mineral resources are of prime importance.

The finding of passes suitably placed so that railways could make their way through the Rockies, the Selkirks, and the Gold Ranges, and follow the canyons of the Thompson and the Fraser to the sea, gave a westward outlet for the products of the Prairies, and determined the growth of Vancouver as a great seaport.

Formerly the presence of coal at Nanaimo on Vancouver Island, providing fuel for ships on the Pacific coast, seemed of great promise, but the supply of oil from the United States has greatly reduced the demand for solid fuel. It is of interest to note that these coal-mines are worked beneath the sea like those of Cape Breton Island on the Atlantic. Both islands supply excellent bituminous coal, though the deposits are of very different ages, the Nanaimo beds belonging to the Cretaceous (late-Mesozoic), and the Sydney coal being of true Carboniferous age.

In this outline of the influence of geologic factors on the economic development of Canada, some of the striking relationships have been noted, but the more intimate bonds of contact between a country and its inhabitants have not been touched. The hills and valleys and plains of the countryside are a part of one's

life; the broad lakes and tree-enclosed ponds, the powerful rivers and the streams that wander through forests and meadows, shape the fancy and mould the thoughts of those who live beside them, and the character of the Canadian people is profoundly influenced, though largely unconsciously, by the spacious landscapes and the broad possibilities presented by the half-continent they possess. If Canadians build up a strong nationality with broad sympathies and a comprehensive outlook, this will in no small degree be due to the breadth and simplicity of the geological structure of the country, which is not cut up by nature into narrow compartments but spreads out its physiographic features on a grand scale.

— REVIEWS —

RUSSIA AND BOLSHEVISM*

ALEXANDER BRADY

LITERATURE in English on Russia and Bolshevism has grown vastly since the depression began in 1929. Every year sees a bountiful crop of volumes, ranging from the few serious and competent studies, like those by Calvin Hoover and Maurice Dobb, to the many superficial and ephemeral impressions of sightseers who spend a few weeks in Leningrad and Moscow. As western capitalism has come under eclipse the subject of Russia has become the Eldorado of the book trade. Different from the ordinary ruck of books are those here selected for comment. With one exception they are written by men who have played outstanding rôles in the modern drama of Russia; one is by the man who perhaps more than any other determines the present policy of the U.S.S.R. The most important fact is that all of them throw brilliant light upon the social conceptions and political thought which either have exercised or now exercise a dominant influence in the life of contemporary Russia, and threaten to affect greatly the life of western civilization.

Leon Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution* is already securely lodged within a high niche in the literature of modern politics. From the appearance of the first volume of the English translation in 1932, it was

*_The History of the Russian Revolution_, by Leon Trotsky, vols. I, II, and III, Simon and Shuster.
The Crucifixion of Liberty, by Alexander Kerensky, John Day Company.
Leninism, by Joseph Stalin, vols. I and II, International Publishers.
A History of Bolshevism, by Arthur Rosenberg, Oxford University Press.

greeted by reviewers with unbounded praise. *The Times* remarked that such works appeared only once in a century. This enthusiastic welcome is readily understood. In the first place, the book is planned and written with consummate literary skill, despite occasional pages of profuseness and repetition. Coruscating with epigrams, it conveys the vivid drama and surging enthusiasms of the revolution. Whatever the prejudices of the reader, it compels him to share in the spirit of vigorous hope with which the principal revolutionists undertook their task. But this literary excellence is not the only significance of Trotsky's work. Within it are many elements. It is a narrative history that carries one along without effort; it is an interesting gallery of personalities, even if these are often drawn with bitterness and in a manner that is unconvincing; it is a work on social psychology which duly recognizes the varied complexities of social life; above all it is a text-book on the principles of revolution, in the formulation of which Trotsky, the arch-conspirator and brilliant politician, assumes the panoply of social philosopher.

It is proper to admit that Trotsky's principles are not novel. They are the principles of revolution of the Marx-Leninist system, with certain features selected for special emphasis and expounded with superb power. "The fundamental forces of the historic process are classes"—such is his Marxist premise. He then proceeds to argue and to illustrate throughout three portly volumes that a revolution is a movement of the masses which transfers power from one class to another. "The most indubitable feature of a revolution is the direct interference of the masses in historic events." One need not spoil the work for the reader by tracing out the steps whereby power was transferred in Russia from the czar and the property-owners to

the proletariat—the predisposing conditions in Russia's economic and social structure, the rôle of the party, the special opportunities for action provided by the Great War, the correlation of suitable forces and the insurrection which eventually brought the seizure of power on October 25, 1917. Of course, Trotsky really stopped too soon. The revolution did not end in October. The struggle of classes for power has gone on ever since, and it is a myth that the proletariat in Trotsky's sense now rules Russia. Indeed, Trotsky would be the first to admit this fact. But nearly all written history must stop before the tale is complete. We can only be glad for what Trotsky has achieved: namely, a work which despite its defects is by far the most powerful attempt to explain what happened in Russia in 1917 and is the foremost modern commentary upon the character of revolutions in general.

Alexander Kerensky's *Crucifixion of Liberty* is in a different class from Trotsky's *History*. It is a somewhat rambling combination of autobiography and history, written mainly—as the author admits—to present a passionate plea for political liberty. To Kerensky, as one may expect, the present system of government in Russia is a violent destruction of liberty; it represents a reversion from the achievement of that freedom towards which Russia, under the guidance of her social thinkers, had been moving from the nineteenth century. And Kerensky is anxious that this crucifixion of liberty be not interpreted as the expression of allegedly Asiatic "elemental Russian forces." Its principal perpetrator, Lenin, sprang from the same *milieu* as Kerensky. "I was born under the same sky, I breathed the same air, I heard the same peasant songs and played in the same college playground. I saw the same limitless horizons from the same high bank of the Volga, and I know, in my blood and my bones, and

I assert emphatically, that it is only by losing all touch with our native land, only by stamping out all native feeling for it, only so could one do what Lenin did, in deliberately and cruelly mutilating Russia." In brief, Kerensky's explanation of Lenin is that the latter from early youth saw Russia only from a conspirator's cellar, and, therefore, failed to appreciate whatever worth existed in the old *régime*.

This book does not reveal Kerensky to be in any real sense a penetrating political thinker. He makes no adequate attempt to analyse the content of the liberty for which he so deeply yearns. He is a romanticist, appreciating without doubt some of the genuine values in social life but failing to recognize the conditions under which they can exist and develop. On the Revolution of 1917 he comments interestingly, but he does not satisfactorily explain away his own blunders and those of his government: the July offensive, the tardiness in implementing agrarian reforms, inadequate grappling with the problem of the food scarcity, delay in calling the national assembly, and the unhappy policy in regard to the allies, the mistakes in which Kerensky now frankly admits. The book is mainly significant as the despairing cry of a Russian liberal at the failure of his country to achieve a political and social system in which liberty of the individual would be amply recognized, and incidentally it confirms Trotsky's explanations why the ideas of Kerensky did not triumph in 1917.

Stalin's two volumes on *Leninism* should logically be read after Trotsky's *History*. But alas, what a falling off in style and design. They consist of articles and addresses written or delivered at different times for the edification of the members of the Russian Communist party. Consequently they abound in repetitions of argu-

ment, are profuse, and indulge in hair-splitting distinctions. Yet if the reader can survive the pages of dreary polemics he will duly be rewarded, for in these volumes we have the most elaborate and authoritative statement of the Leninist doctrinal system within which the political and economic discussions of contemporary Russia are mainly imprisoned. Specially significant are those sections which throw light on Stalin's dominant doctrine that Socialism may be realized in a single country, in contrast to Trotsky's view that the revolution in Russia must merely be the first step in effecting a world revolution in order that Socialism be achieved. Stalin rightly finds the basis for his doctrine in the ideas of Lenin, and endeavours to guide his country along the path which Lenin believed would lead to Socialism; namely, the industrialization of Russia and the organization of peasants into co-operative societies, supplemented after 1928 by the formation of collective farms. In volume II, especially, Trotskyism is subjected to a bitter attack as a "*bourgeois* system," designed to sap the enthusiasm of millions of workers in their task of eliminating private capitalism from the U.S.S.R.

Needless to say there is no critical appraisal in Stalin's work of the dictatorship of the proletariat, although there are many descriptive remarks and polemical explanations of it. For an admirable discussion of the Stalin *régime* and an excellent general account of the evolution of Bolshevism the reader must go to Arthur Rosenberg's *History of Bolshevism*. Arthur Rosenberg has been a prominent German Communist and a member of the executive of the Third International from which he resigned in 1927. In this book he sets out to write objectively the history of Bolshevism, and no one can deny his success. He starts off with a chapter, "Marx to Lenin," which suffers from over-compression and in a few cases is

misleading because of this excessive economy. But the author quickly strikes his stride, and in subsequent chapters we have unfolded clearly and forcibly the development of Bolshevist doctrines to the Revolution of 1917, the rôle of Lenin, the *régime* which has followed the revolution with its internal and external policies analysed in a manner penetrating and convincing, the fortunes of the Third International, the Stalin *versus* Trotsky controversy, and the general state of Communism in the world.

Arthur Rosenberg presents the thesis that German social conditions in the forties, when Marx began to write, and Russian conditions some fifty years later when Lenin took over and expounded Marxism, were similar. At the periods mentioned both countries had large proletariats, legally hampered and inadequately organized to influence the state directly. Such similarity in conditions determined the fact that Lenin for years expounded a Communist creed patterned intimately upon that developed by Marx in the forties of the last century. But in the western states in the intervening fifty years new labour organizations had emerged and fundamental changes took place in state policies. Hence the phenomena of British trade unionism, social democracy and Bernstein revisionism. With these movements the communism of Lenin was incompatible. A revision of his position was not undertaken until he, and especially Stalin, found it necessary in protecting the Russian state to place brakes upon the aggressiveness of the Third International. The policy of Socialism in a single state could not be a happy bedfellow with an aggressive Third International, devoted to the task of extending the revolution into all other countries. As the position of Soviet Russia has become more secure in the world, the Third International has steadily headed towards destruction, and the two facts are related

as cause and effect. Such in brief is Arthur Rosenberg's plausible analysis. *A History of Bolshevism* is the book for readers who lack the time for a perusal of the volumes of Trotsky and Stalin. More than that, it is an excellent and almost necessary supplement to these, and should be read by all who would understand the nature of modern Communism.

A PLEA FOR HUMANISM*

A. F. B. Clark

The debate which raged a few years ago in America over "the new humanism" revealed—if it revealed nothing else—the need of some such book as this. On the one hand, the anti-humanists assumed that Professor Babbitt and his disciples were an isolated academic offshoot of American Puritanism, whereas they were really part of a world-movement whose ultimate origins might be traced back as far as Taine. On the other hand, the humanists were not conspicuously successful in making clear to their opponents and to the bystanders the philosophical bases of their system. The contestants on both sides seemed more anxious to deliver wallops and collect scalps than to extend the empire of sweetness and light, and the ultimate residuum of it all amounted to little more than the Frenchman's "pint of bad blood."

Mr. Mercier's book aims to situate "humanism" in its proper world-setting and at the same time to serve as a minute exegesis of its philosophy. Let it be said at once that by its competence and by its high seriousness it is a worthy tribute to the power of inspiring disciple-

**The Challenge of Humanism: An Essay in Comparative Criticism*, by Louis J. A. Mercier, Oxford University Press.

ship that was one of the rare gifts of the late master of all American humanists. (There is even in Mr. Mercier's style an occasional touching reminiscence of Babbitt's turns of expression—an influence that none who were exposed to his magnetic personality could escape.) It is the work of a man as convinced as Babbitt himself that "humanism" offers an escape from "the great confusion" of our contemporary world into which "naturalism" has plunged us. To any reader already sympathetic to the doctrine it expounds, it will bring much additional light and the comforting sense of belonging to a great communion of humanists widespread in time and space. It is not so clear that the book will fulfil the purpose which the author seems to have in mind when he writes—apropos of the debate referred to above—: "one critic ventured to say that, if humanism could be explained in simple terms, most people would accept it."

In the first place the book, though admirably clear and logical, is hardly written in what "most people"—unread in philosophy—would call "simple terms." The pages are studded with references to "the higher will," "the higher imagination," "the humanistic plane," "semi-Pelagianism," "*frein vital*," *etc.* In fact, what we are presented with is the bare skeleton of humanistic thought, stripped of the breathing flesh of concrete application and apt quotation that makes the reading of a book by Babbitt or More such a feast for the intellect and imagination combined. The caustic wit of Babbitt and the Platonic charm of More have given place to a dry, scholastic precision, which, however, does not succeed altogether in avoiding the exasperating iteration which mars the style of the first of these masters. This extreme abstractness of the treatment has, moreover,

the disadvantage of subtly betraying the character of Babbitt's teaching. In one of his earlier essays he deplored the tendency of modern "philosophy" towards metaphysical woolliness and remoteness from everyday life and wished that in philosophical controversies we might see again, as in the days of Socrates, what he called "the flash of the naked blade" (meaning the sharp impact of thought on life). It is significant that Babbitt's approach to philosophy was through concrete problems of literary criticism and particularly that "the higher imagination," in his conception, mediated between the universal and the particular. Yet the problems of art and literature play a very small part in this book, the concept of "the higher will" appealing much more strongly to Mr. Mercier. This is all the more regrettable as the aesthetics of the humanists are a stumbling block to many people who can accept the humanistic attitude to ethical and political problems, and who yet are troubled by the obvious fact that, to Babbitt at least, his aesthetic views are inseparably bound up with his general attitude. What a pity that Mr. Mercier has not given these people more help, especially as, in his interesting and important chapter on "Scholasticism and its relation to Humanism," he has a rather lengthy passage on the aesthetics of that school which seem to be more tolerant and latitudinarian than Babbitt's variety. Why has he not tried to relate scholastic aesthetics to humanistic aesthetics?

A minor defect—but, nevertheless, important—is the incompleteness of the essay as a comparative study. An important chapter is devoted to Seillière, but M. Pierre Lasserre, whose *Le Romantisme français* created a furore in France as far back as 1908 and who from then on was in the forefront of French humanism, is absolutely unmentioned except in the bibliographical note (and

then for a minor work), as is also the contemporary champion of rationalistic humanism in France, M. Julien Benda. M. Jacques Maritain and Mr. T. S. Eliot receive only passing notice. Mr. Mercier probably has reasons for these inequalities of treatment, but he has not communicated them to us.

The feature of this book that will determine more than anything else the character of its reception by the reader still remains to be mentioned. It is a decidedly "tendencious" book. As we proceed, the crunching sound of theological "ground ice" becomes more and more audible, and, if we are not careful, we shall find ourselves, in the last pages, deposited, if not in the lap of mother church, at least at the feet of revealed religion. Some say that that is where all humanists come to rest ultimately, that, in avoiding the "naturalistic trap," they inevitably fall into the snares of "Grace." Yet Mr. Mercier admits that up to the time of his writing Babbitt had kept his foot free of the "theological trap." This testimony is now supplemented by the precious evidence (just preceding the supreme hour) preserved for us by Mr. More in the QUARTERLY of January, 1934: "The dogma of Grace, the notion of help and strength poured into the soul from a superhuman source, was in itself repugnant to him, and the church as an institution he held personally in deep distaste." From his life-long friend, almost an *alter ego* (but whose views on religion by no means coincided with his own) these words have a ring of finality. Mr. More adds: "he was much closer to Buddhism than would appear from his public utterances."

We are not called upon here to discuss the merits and demerits of humanism. But it should be pointed out that Mr. Mercier emphasizes the central misunderstanding of the humanists' position which consists in

representing them as reactionaries who deny the element of changefulness in life, who see the One but not the Many. On the contrary, Babbitt has expressed their position in unmistakable words: "Strictly speaking, I have said, life does not give here an element of oneness and there an element of change; it gives a oneness that is always changing. Moreover, man does not contemplate this oneness from without; he is himself a oneness that is always changing." Some may think that the humanists, as compared with the naturalists, nevertheless underestimate the element of change as revealed by modern science. But can these critics, casting their eyes on the world-scene as it is to-day, deny the practical truth of these words of Goethe: "Everything that liberates the spirit without corresponding growth in self-mastery is pernicious"? In the noble equilibrium of that utterance perhaps this famous controversy may some day come to rest.

THE EMERGENCE OF CHRISTIANITY*

G. S. Brett

The years that fall between the death of Alexander in 322 B.C. and the birth of St. Augustine in 354 A.D. made up a period which to us seems complex and confused. It is hard to say whether it seemed so to the men of that day. They often complained of the vices, superstitions, and sorrows of their age: but every generation has produced some self-tormenting spirits who bewailed the evil times on which they had fallen, just as it produced its laughing philosophers, its satirists, or those who say with Montaigne that it is never possible to make the

*_Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo_, by A. D. Nock, Oxford University Press.

world either very much better or very much worse. Certainly in those six centuries great events happened and there was an embarrassing richness of experience. New horizons became visible: the old simplicity of local religions which knew no competition was ruined by the coming and going of strange prophets: democracy was crushed by the weight of imperialism and at the same time the conflict of beliefs in the new empires disintegrated their unity: the individual found himself free in a new sense, emancipated from his home and his town to be a citizen of the world. Like the young man who finds himself for the first time alone in a great city, these uprooted wanderers seem uncertain whether to rejoice in their escape from bondage or faintly console themselves for being "fragments of the Divine" and insignificant orphans in the guardianship of necessity!

Historical research seems to be guided by interests which arise imperceptibly and then reach out into the past for parallels or precedents, hoping to make themselves intelligible. When democracy became significant at the end of the eighteenth century, the first great histories of Greece appeared: the growth of science in the last fifty years has stimulated research into the origins of scientific thought: economics has had a similar effect in modifying the narrowness of political history and emphasizing the significance of social changes. Without producing more proofs, we may point the moral by adding that what is rather loosely called the Alexandrian age has attracted increasing attention during the past quarter of a century and this seems due to a dim sense of kinship with that epoch, urging scholars to examine the records and define the characteristics of that variegated civilization.

One obvious reason for this acute interest is the fact

that Christianity emerged from this background. It is easy to regard this event as a miracle; but even a miracle has its historical setting, and it may be that the preparation for a crisis is as miraculous as the crisis itself. This idea occurred to the earlier writers who suggested by the phrase "preparation for the Gospel" the importance of the historical background. Unfortunately the phrase tended to restrict the outlook. At this distance of time it is not easy to construct a faithful picture of the way a new sect, still insignificant, was regarded as only another oriental cult or suspected of being either a philosophical school or a cloak for political intrigue. Professor Nock's book is one more study in the growth of Christianity, but it adopts a new and subtle method of approach which needs careful evaluation. The word "conversion" is to be taken in a wide sense to denote the attitude of a person who decides to change his moral or religious allegiance. It does not necessarily imply a profound psychological crisis, for it may mean little more than a preference for one ritual over another, or even the convenience of adopting a local form of worship when the individual finds in a new home no temple to his own traditional gods. This study of conversion is, accordingly, a contribution to the history of religion. It is based on wide learning and presents an intensive description of many forces at work in the period, such as the transmission of eastern cults through the Roman Empire, the part played by the missionary philosophers and the social atmosphere in which Christianity was nourished. Christianity had many rivals. The mystery religions satisfied the emotions of those who had no taste for philosophic contemplation: the philosophies, on the other hand, provided lofty moral principles and rational ideas of human relationships for

those who had the inclination and the ability to understand them. Like the Hinduism and the Mohammedanism of to-day, they were tolerant to the point of laxity. Judaism and Christianity stand out as righteously intolerant: they insisted on rigid adherence to their rules and whole-hearted acceptance of their doctrines. The most striking example of this is the opposition to the worship of the emperors: to many it seemed mere eccentricity to make so much fuss about a practice which had only formal political significance. But Christianity was slowly becoming distinct by its insistence on a change of heart and a new way of life. Salvation through ritual was not new: asceticism and purity of life and lovingkindness were not new: but the "real novelty in Christianity was the motive which it supplied for good conduct and the abhorrence of past bad conduct which it demanded." The transition from the old to the new in this epoch of religious development is summed up by saying that the old, at its best, built on "a consciousness of goodness and on common sense", the new built "on a consciousness of sin and on revelation."

We have no space to illustrate this thesis; to do so adequately would be to reproduce the whole argument. As the book is the product of much learning it demands careful reading and close attention: but it is always clear and often in its own way entertaining, as in the chapter on the conversion of Lucius, in this case a conversion to the worship of Isis. For all who are interested in the process by which religion in the West grew out of Platonism into Christianity and realize adequately how much was assimilated at each stage to be transformed into the ultimate structure of the religious thought of the present time, this book will be indispensable for knowledge and a source of great satisfaction.